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Indian Institute, Oxford.

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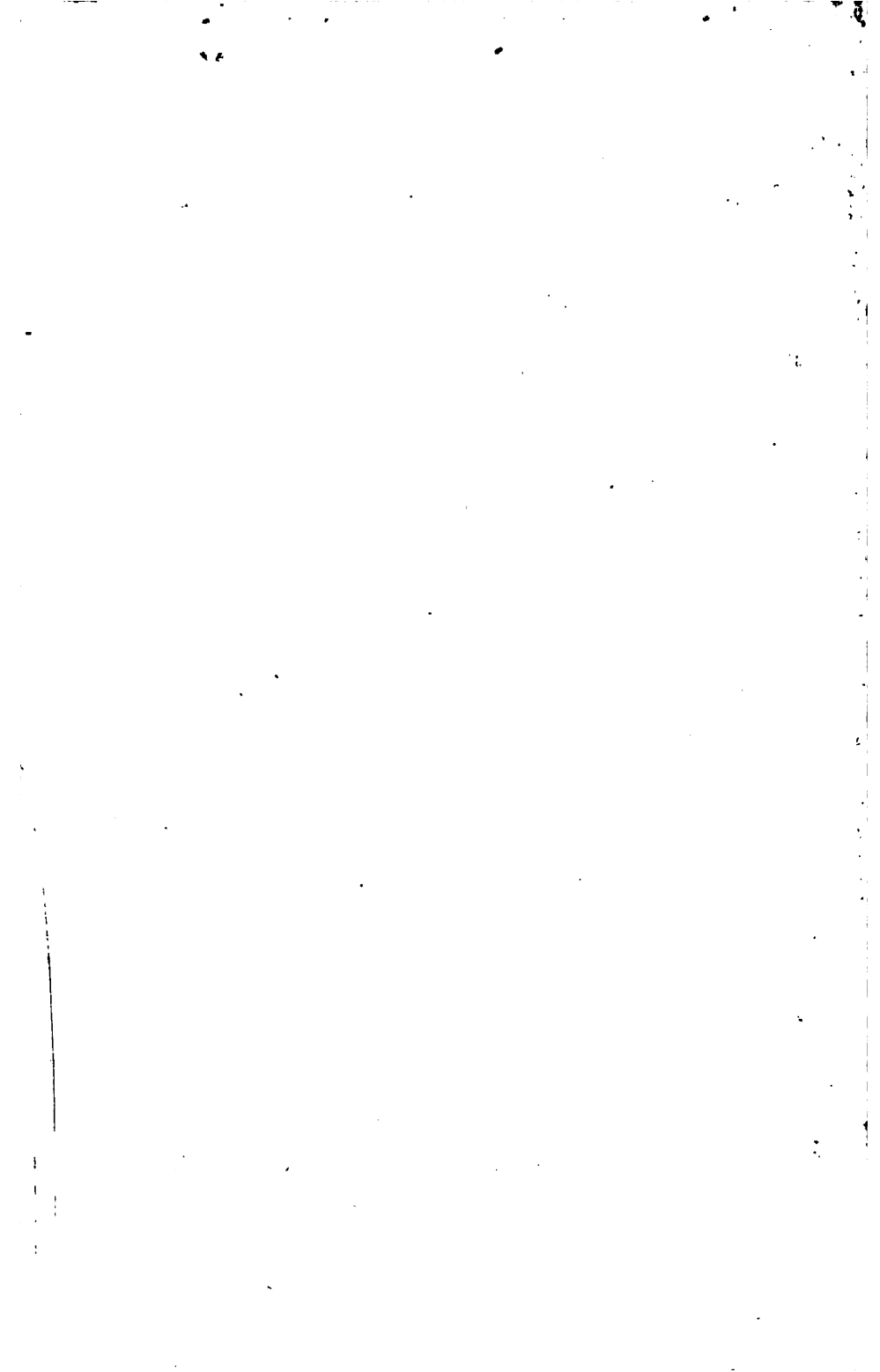
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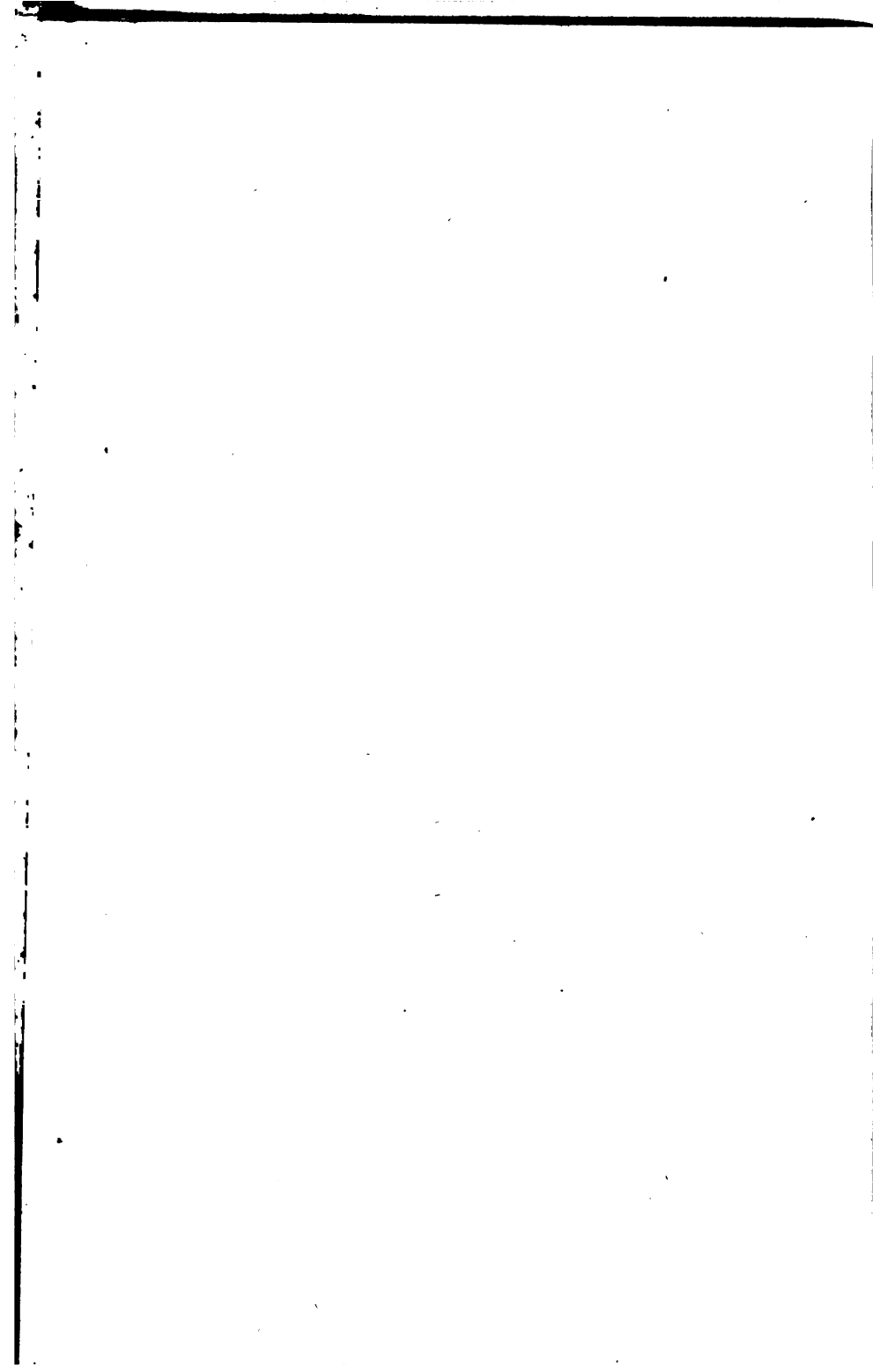
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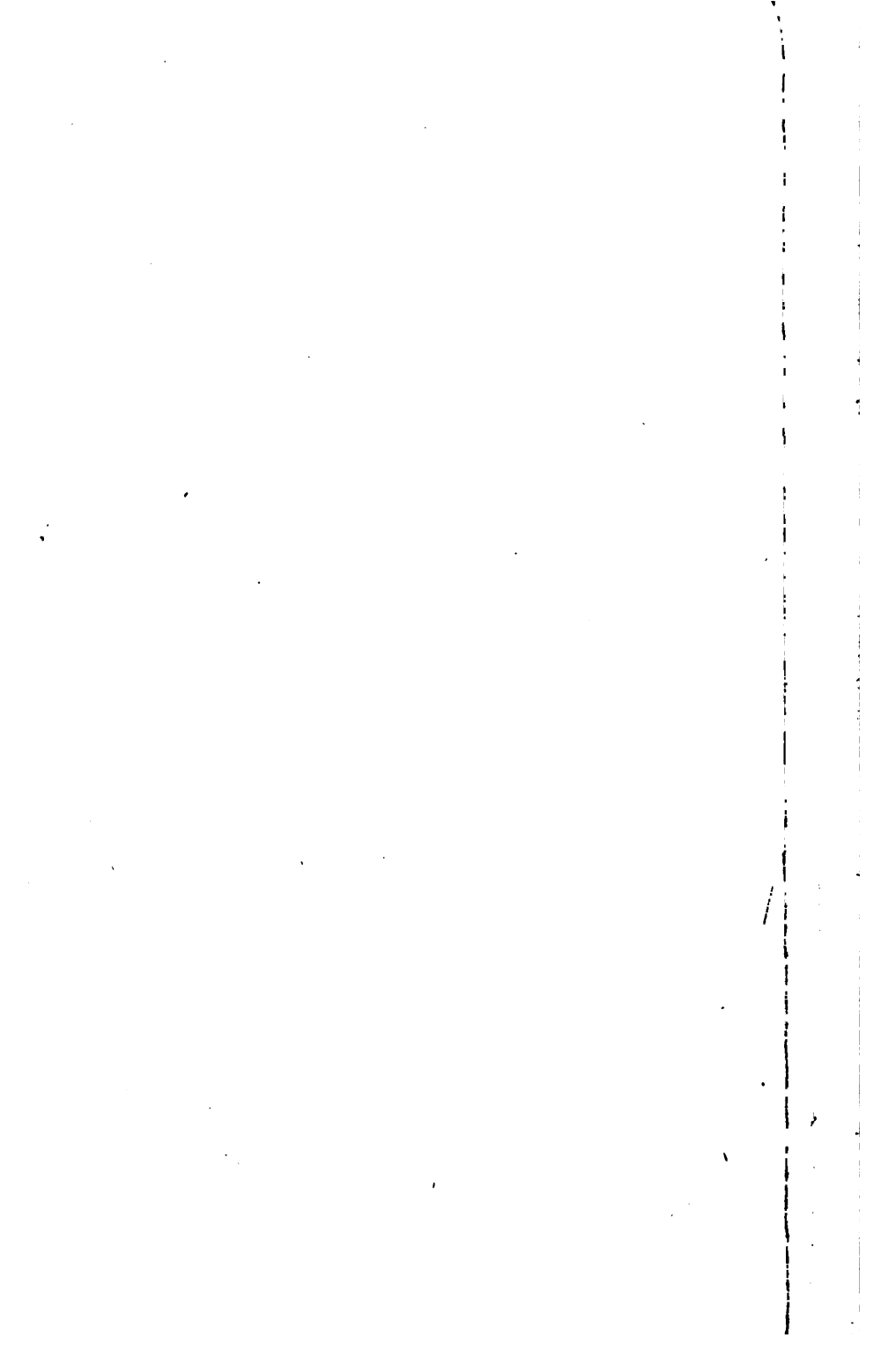
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THE HISTORY OF THE SIKHS,

TOGETHER WITH

A CONCISE ACCOUNT OF THE PUNJAUB AND CASHMERE;

ITS

TOPOGRAPHY, RIVERS, CLIMATE AND PRODUCTIONS, CUSTOMS, MANNERS
AND CHARACTER OF THE PEOPLE, COMMERCE, MANUFACTURES,
HISTORY AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS, GOVERNMENT,
ADMINISTRATION OF THE LAWS, REVENUE,
EXTENT OF POPULATION, ETC. ETC. ETC.

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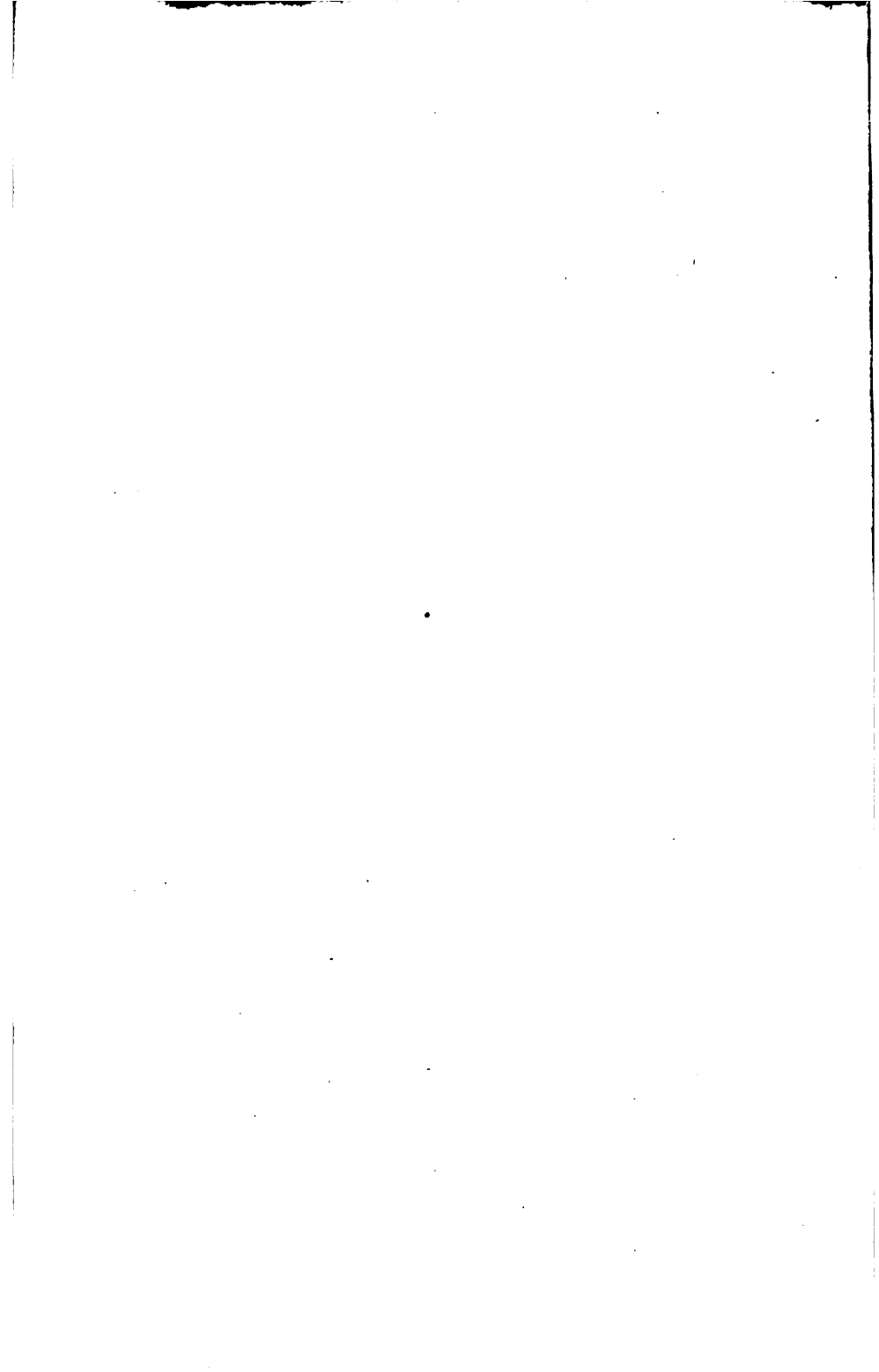


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THE HISTORY OF THE SIKHS.

CHAPTER I.

TOPOGRAPHY OF THE PUNJAUB.

The Province of Lahore—Puckely—Muzifferabad—Chuch—Attock—Hussein Abdaul—Rawil Pindée—Manicyala—Jelalpore—Angur—Doabeh Sinder Sagor—Doabeh Barry—Umritsir—Jallinder—Kish-tewar—Jamboe—Kangra—Nadone—Cooloo—Mundi, &c. &c.

THE extensive country to the north-west of India, known by the name of the Punjaub, derives its appellation from the Persian words,—*punj*, five, and *aub*, water, from the five rivers which flow through the territory. These rivers are, the Indus or Attock, the Jeylum, the Chenab, the Ravee, and the Sutledge, the first and last forming the geographical boundaries of a space extending from 29° 15' to 34° north, long. 70° 40' to 76° east. The political limits of the country, however, extend somewhat beyond the banks of the two principal rivers, and may be reckoned, including Peshawur and the countries west of the Indus, Iskar-doh, Ladakh, and other hill states north, at 600 miles in length from east to west, and 350 miles in breadth from north to south. In the immediate north and

north-east of the territory lie the chains of mountains known as the Hindoo Koosh and the Himalaya range, the latter divided from the former by the extensive valley of the Indus.

The plain of the Punjaub, to use the words of Thornton, the Gazetteer, "is divided by its rivers into five extensive natural Sections, described by the native term *Doab*, signifying a great tongue of land, lying in the bifurcation above the confluence of two rivers."

x The rivers are all in a great measure navigable, not less than 1,960 miles of the five principal streams, with their four tributaries, Punjneed, Trinall, Beas and Epura being available for purposes of inland traffic. Irrigation to an almost unparalleled extent is likewise carried on without much assistance from artificial means the great plain being extremely level, or sloping so gradually from north-east to south-west that the highest elevation above the level of the sea does not exceed 16,000 feet, descending to about 200. In fact, the exceeding smoothness of the country has the effect of causing the rivers to frequently change their courses; not one of them runs within several miles of the great towns whose walls they washed twenty years ago. Scattered over the territory, but chiefly in the vicinity of the rivers, are numerous towns, fortresses, and villages. The principal towns are Lahore, (the capital and seat of Government,) Umritsur, Vuzeerabad, Mozufferabad, Kashmir or Serinugger, and Peshawur. The fortresses are Umritsur, formerly the depositary of the royal treasury, a place of no particular strength; Rotus, on the high road from Lahore to Peshawur, strikingly situated upon an eminence, but now suffered to fall into decay; and the castle on the banks of the Attock, which commands the passage of the river. Most of the towns, however, are surrounded by a mud or brick wall of frail quality. Lahore itself is so defended, with the addition of a dry moat, which, on

emergency, could be filled with water from the neighbouring Ravee. But the mud walls would afford no protection against Artillery. They were originally constructed by the inhabitants as a sort of defence from the attacks of one another, and are only efficacious in resisting incursions or predatory visitations in times of civil commotion.—*Col. Steinbach.* ✓

THE PROVINCE OF LAHORE.—(*Lahaur.*)—The province of Lahore is situated between the 30th and 34th degrees of north latitude. To the north it is bounded by Cashmere, and the course of the Indus; to the south by Delhi, Ajmeer, and Mooltan; on the east it has the mountains of Northern Hindostan; and on the west is separated by the Indus from Afghanistan. In length it may be estimated at 340 miles by 200, the average breadth. By Abul Fazel, in 1582, this province is described as follows:

“The soubah of Lahore is situated in the second climate. The length, from the river Sutleje, is 180 coss; the breadth from Bhember to Chowkundy, one of the dependencies of Satgurrah, measures 86 coss. On the east lies Sirhind; on the north Cashmere; on the south Bicanere and Ajmeer; Mooltan bounds it on the west. This soubah has six fine rivers issuing from the northern mountains, the Sutleje, the Beyah the Ravee, the Chinaub, the Jhyllum or Behut, anciently the Bedusta, and the Sinde or Indus.

“This soubah is very populous, highly cultivated, and exceedingly healthy. The cultivated lands are chiefly supplied with water from wells. The winter is much severer here than in any other part of Hindostan, although considerably milder than in Persia or Tartary. Ice, brought from the northern mountains, is sold the whole year. The horses resemble Irakies, and are very fine. In some parts, by sifting and washing the sands of the rivers, they obtain gold, silver, copper, rowey, tin, brass, and lead.

“This soubah contains 5 doabs, sub-divided into 234 pergunnahs. The measured lands are 16,155,643 begahs ; amount of revenue 569,458,423 dams ; out of which 9,865,594 dams are seyurghal. The province is sub-divided into the following districts, viz. 1, Doabeh Beyt Jallinder ; 2, Doabeh Barry ; 3, Retchnabad ; 4, Doabeh Jennet ; and 5, Sinde Sagor.” The district here named Retchnabad comprehends the country between the Ravee and the Chinaub ; and the Doabeh Jennet that between the Chinaub and the Jhy-lum. The principal geographical and territorial subdivisions of modern times are the following :—

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1, The Punjab, compre- | 7, The Kohistan of Lahore, |
| hending | comprehending |
| 2, Doabeh Sinde Sagor, | 8, Kishtewar, |
| 3, Doabeh Jinhut, | 9, Chandahnee, |
| 4, Doabeh Rechna, | 10, Jamboe, |
| 5, Doabeh Barry, | 11, Kangrah. |
| 6, Doabeh Jallinder, | |

The province of Lahore consists of two portions, nearly equal ; the Kohistan, or mountainous tract, which occupies the whole north-eastern division, and the flat country to the south-west, better known by the name of Punjab, from the five celebrated rivers by which it is intersected ; and this appellation is frequently, but erroneously, applied to the whole province. The climate of course varies, and in the winter season a degree of cold, little inferior to that of the central regions of Europe, is experienced in the northern quarter. The principal rivers are the Indus, the Sutleje or Hysudrus, the Beyah or Hyphasis, the Ravee or Hydraotes, the Chinaub or Acesines, and the Jhylum or Hydaspes which will be described hereafter.

To the south and south-west of Cashmere is a mountainous country, which bounds the Punjab, a low country on the north-east, and supplies its streams with water ; for of the five celebrated rivers intersect-

ing that country, the Jhylum (Hydaspes) alone flows from Cashmere, and has its source in the more remote region of the north. This mountainous tract contains many principalities, the most noted of which are Kish-tewar, Chandahnee, Jamboe or Jummoo, Khussial, Dung Akhoroor, Rajoer and Proanah. The chiefs of these communities are Rajas of Hindoo descent, who retain their Hindoo title, although both they and their subjects have mostly adopted the Mahommedan persuasion. Their territories, being extremely precipitous, are but thinly inhabited. In their language and manners the natives resemble the Cashmerians; but with a considerable mixture of the more southern nations.

In the Kohistan, or Highlands, between the Jamboe and Cashmere many pines are seen, which grow on the face of the mountains; and the willow is also a tree of frequent occurrence. The resinous part of the fir, cut into slips, supplies the common uses of the lamp, but the method of extracting its turpentine and tar is not known or practised by the natives. The climate of the northern districts of Lahore is not favourable to fruits and vegetables, being too hot for the Persian productions, and not sufficiently warm to mature those of India. In many parts of this province large beds of fossil salt are found, and the mountainous tracts, were they investigated, would probably prove rich in all sorts of minerals. At present the sides of the inhabited mountains, when properly cultivated, produce wheat, barley, and a variety of small grains. The spaces under tillage project from the body of the hill in separate flats, in the form of a range of semi-circular stairs. The soil, which is strong and productive, has been propelled into these projections by the rains, which fall with great violence in this quarter from June until October, and the earth washed down is preserved in that state by buttresses of loose stones. Rice is also cultivated in the narrow vallies, but not

in great quantities, nor is it the usual food of the inhabitants, who chiefly subsist on wheat, bread, and peas made into a thick soup.

The Lahore province, from its commanding situation, possesses many advantages over the rest of India, and, under a proper form of government, would alone be sufficient to constitute the basis of a powerful and civilized kingdom. The productive powers of the southern half, intersected by five noble rivers, might be renovated, and the natural strength and temperate climate of the northern unite circumstances in its favour that are generally in collision. These advantages, added to its geographical position at the only assailable quarter, point it out as the quarter from whence Hindostan is to be ruled, conquered and defended. It is nevertheless in a most miserable state of cultivation, and one of the most thinly inhabited of India; the total population dispersed over a surface of near 70,000 square miles probably not exceeding in the aggregate four millions of souls.—(*Sir John Malcolm, Forster, F. Buchanan, Sir D. Ochterlony, Elphinstone, Macartney, &c. &c. &c.*)

LAHORE.—The capital of the late Raja Runjeet Singh the modern chieftain of the Seiks, situated on the south side of the Ravee river. Lat. $31^{\circ} 36'$ N. long. $74^{\circ} 3'$ E. The river is here about 300 yards wide, but the stream is not deep or rapid, except during the height of the rains. The old fort is a place of no strength, without a ditch or any defences for cannon. The walls are lofty and decorated on the outside, but hastening to ruin, as are most of the private buildings. Lahore is notwithstanding still a town of considerable size, with a good bazar, but it is not inhabited by wealthy people: on account of the frequent sackings it has sustained, they have migrated for safety to Umritsir.✓

The palace was originally founded by Acber, and enlarged by his successors. Across the Ravee, at Shah

Durra, about two miles north of Lahore, stands the celebrated mausoleum of Jehangeer, within a wall of nearly 600 yards square. It is a magnificent building 66 paces on each side, and still in very good condition, but much inferior to the Tauje Mahal at Agra. To the southward of this, in the open plain, is to be seen the tomb of Noor Jehan Begum, a building 36 paces square. In 1812, Runjeet Singh had built and was building a very thick wall and rampart round the city, with a deep broad ditch. The palace had also been nearly surrounded by a deep and broad ditch; the whole faced with brick, and the earth thrown inwards, so as to form a broad rampart with bastions at intervals. These works, however appear to be commanded from the city by heaps of ruins, which would require to be removed. The tomb of Jehangeer and its enclosure are capable of containing sufficient grain and liquor for a month's expenditure of a large army; and although the city generally is verging to decay, the domes and minarets of the mosques, the lofty walls of the fort, the splendid mausoleum of Jehangeer, and numberless inferior tombs and temples that surround the town, still render it an object of curiosity and admiration.

Travelling distance from Delhi 380 miles; from Agra 517; from Lucknow 639; from Bombay 1070; and from Calcutta 1356 miles.—(*Sir D. Ochterlony, 11th Register, Rennell, Elphinstone, &c. &c.*)

PUCKELY (*Paxali*).—This district occupies the north-western corner of the Lahore province, where it is enclosed on three sides by the Indus and Jhyllum rivers; and by Abul Fazel, in 1582, is described as follows: "Circar Puckely measures in length 35, and in breadth 25 coss. On the east lies Cashmere; on the north Kinore; on the south the country of the Gucker tribe; and on the west is Attock Benares. Timour left a small number of troops to keep possession of

this quarter, and some of their descendants are here to this day. Snow is continually falling in the mountains of this district, and sometimes in the plains. The winter is very severe, but the summer heat moderate. Like Hindostan, Puckely has periodical rains. Here are three rivers; the Kishengunga, the Behut, and the Sinde. The language of the inhabitants has no affinity with those of Cashmere, Zabulistan, or Hindoostan. Nakhud and barley are the most plentiful grains here. Apricots, peaches and walnuts grow wild. Formerly the Rajas of the country were tributary to Cashmere."

The whole of this district in modern times lies to the east of the Indus, but there is reason to suppose that it formerly also comprehended a tract to the west of that river. According to Mr. Elphinstone, the territory is at present partitioned into the following smaller subdivisions; viz. Dhumtour, or the country of the Jadoons, possessed by a branch of the Yusefze Afghans. North of it is Turnaul, a woody and mountainous tract, which confines on the north to Puckely Proper, a country of the same description, but much more extensive. It is inhabited by Sewadees or Swaties, and is under a governor appointed by the Afghan sovereign of Cabul. All these divisions stretch along the Indus until hemmed in on the north by the snowy mountains. The common road from Cashmere to the Indus lies through the Puckely territory; but the inhabitants are so notorious for a fierce and predatory disposition, that the route is generally esteemed too hazardous.—(*Elphinstone, Rennell, Forster, &c.*)

MUZIFFERABAD (*Muzafar-abad*).—To the east of Puckely are the countries of the Bumbas, and Cukkas, both Mahommedan tribes. The former is under two or three chiefs styled Rajas, the principal of whom resides at Muzifferabad. Their territories consist of difficult passes, vast mountains, and dense forests; yet

they form the only communication between Cabul and Cashmere. Lat. $34^{\circ} 35'$ N. long. $73^{\circ} 45'$ E. 63 miles W. from the city of Cashmere.

The town of Muzifferabad when visited by Mr. Forster in 1783, was small, but populous, and was then the residence of a chief entitled Sultan Mahmood. The face of the surrounding country exhibits a continued view of mountains, on the sides of which patches of cultivated ground are seen, and scattered hamlets of three or four cottages. The inhabitants of the tract denominated Bumbas, are Mahommedans of an Afghan origin, and usually hostile to the Cashmerians, as being their nearest neighbours, The Kishengunga river runs to the left of this town, with a course nearly S. W. and falls into the Jhyllum, among the mountains at the head of the Punjab, A common mode of passing the river here, is on an inflated sheep or dog's skin, which supports the head and breast of the passenger, while it is impelled and guided by the motion of the legs. The road between Cashmere and Muzifferabad, which is half way to the Indus, trends to the south-west, and leads over a country covered with mountains intersected by deep vallies.—(*Forster, Elphinstone, 11th Register, &c.*)

CHUCH.—This small district, or valley, is situated at the north-west corner of the Lahore province, about the 34th degree of north latitude, and is bounded on the north and west by the Indus, and on the south by the Ghursheen river. This territory, and the adjacent district named Hazareh, contain many fertile plains, inhabited by Hindoos converted to the Mahommedan religion, and named Goojers. Among them also are many turbulent Afghans of various tribes, who are in fact masters of the country. Within its geographical limits, but beyond those of the valley, are situated the towns of Attock and Hussoo. Near Attock the plain of Chuch is flat and well cultivated, principally with

wheat ; further east the country is of a wavy surface, generally dry and barren, and cut up by deep ravines ; but approaching the eastern border is the beautiful valley of Hussein Abdaul.—(*Elphinstone, &c.*)

Attock (*Atac, a limit.*)—This town is situated on the east side of the Indus, and to this day retains the ancient name of Varanas, or Benaras ; but it is more generally known by that of Attock. The old fortress was built by Acber, A. D. 1581. Lat. $33^{\circ} 56'$ N. long. $71^{\circ} 57'$ E.

About ten miles to the north of Attock, the Indus is seen issuing through the mountains by a number of channels, which are reduced to two when it receives the Cabul river. At this point of junction there are many rocks, through which both rivers dash with great impetuosity and noise, but afterwards they collect into one bed, and proceed through the mountains with a deep but narrow stream, between high perpendicular banks of rock. When it reaches the fort of Attock the Indus is about 260 yards broad (on the 18th of June, 1809,) but the channel is too deep, and the current too rapid, to admit of its being accurately sounded. The banks are of black stone, polished by the force of the stream, and by the white sand it contains, so as to shine like marble. In the midst are the famous rocks of Jemalia and Kemalia, but the reported whirlpool does not rage in the month of June.

The modern fort of Attock, the residence of the Afghan governor of the province, stands on a low hillock on the east bank. Its figure is that of a parallelogram, having the shortest faces (those parallel to the river) about 400 yards long, and the other sides about double that extent. The walls are of polished stone ; but although the place makes a handsome show, it is commanded by a rough hill, from which it is only separated by a ravine, and, being situated on a slope, almost the whole of the interior, and the reverse of

the walls on three faces, are visible from the opposite side. The town was formerly considerable, but is now much decayed. On the side of the Indus opposite to Attock is a small village distinguished by a kind of fort erected by Nadir Shah, and a fine aqueduct made by some former chief of the Khuttick Afghan tribe, to irrigate the contiguous lands. Notwithstanding the rapidity of the river here, it is easily passed, both in boats and on the inflated hides of oxen.

It is remarkable that the three great invaders of Hindostan, Alexander, Timour, and Nadir Shah, in three distant ages, and with views and talents extremely different, advanced by the same route with hardly any deviation. Alexander had the merit of discovering the way: after passing the mountains, he encamped at Alexandria Paropamisana, on the same site with the modern city of Candahar, and, having subdued or conciliated the natives situated on the north-west bank of the Indus, he crossed the river at Taxila, now Attock, the only place where the stream is so tranquil that a bridge can be thrown over it.—(*Elphinstone, Rennell, Wilford, Dr. Roberston, &c. &c.*)

HUSSEIN ABDAUL.—By this name a beautiful valley in the north-west corner of the Lahore province is designated, situated about 24 miles east from the Indus. Lat. 33° 55' N. long. 72° 25' E.

The valley of Hussein Abdaul was always a favourite resting place of the Mogul emperors, during their annual migrations to Cashmere; but the gardens and buildings have long gone to ruins. The tomb of a devout Mahommedan named Hussein Abdaul, which communicates the name, is partly composed of marble and stands in a square enclosure. This person was a famous saint of Candahar, there known by the appellation of Baba Wullee. The surname Abdaul, in the Afghan language, signifies mad. In 1809, the hills to the south of the valley of Hussein Abdaul, formed the

boundary of the Afghan dominions in this quarter of Hindostan.—(*Elphinstone, &c.*)

RAWIL PINDEE.—This town is within the Seik territories, in the province of Lahore, situated about 68 miles E. from the river Indus. Lat. $33^{\circ} 36'$ N. long. $73^{\circ} 45'$ E. Viewed from without it makes a handsome appearance, being composed of terraced houses, and is besides of considerable extent and populous. In the immediate neighbourhood the country is open and under tolerable cultivation; but from Hussein Abdaul to Rawil Pindée, the country is generally uncultivated, and much intersected with deep ravines. The Mogul emperors cut a road through a ridge of hills, about half way between the two places, which remains in good repair. It is about three-quarters of a mile in length, and paved with large masses of hard blue stone well fitted in to each other. The language spoken here by the Seiks is the dialect known by the name of the Punjaabee; and from this place are usually dated the north-western Acbars, or native newspapers, giving an account of the proceedings of the chiefs of Cabul, Khorasan, Cashmere, Lahore, and Mooltan, and their predatory movements; but they never can be depended on, being frequently the mere invention of the writer, who at the same time aims so little at diversifying his fabrications, that, with a very little alteration, the news of any one year does for that of the succeeding one.—(*Elphinstone, &c. &c. &c.*)

MANICYALA.—A village in the Gucker district, but now possessed by the Seiks, situated about 72 miles east of the Indus, in lat. $33^{\circ} 28'$ N. long $73^{\circ} 25'$ E. At this place there is a remarkable structure, which at first resembles a cupola on a low mound, but on examination is found to be solid. The height from the top of the mound to the top of the building is 70 feet, and the circumference about 150 paces. It is built of large pieces of hard stone, common in the neighbour-

hood, mixed with smaller pieces of a sandy stone. The greater part of the outside is cased with the first mentioned stone, cut quite smooth, but in some parts it has either fallen down, or been left incomplete. The top is flat, and on it traces of the foundation of walls are discoverable, enclosing a space of 11 paces long by 5 broad. In the appearance of this edifice there is nothing Hindoo, it approaching in the whole much nearer to the Grecian style of architecture. By the natives it is called the tope or mound of Manicyala, and is said to have been built by the gods.—(*Elphinstone, &c.*)

JELALPOOR.—This town stands on the north bank of the Jhylum or Hydaspes river, which in the month of July, 1809, was found to be 1800 yards broad, with a depth of 14 feet water. The two banks here present a striking contrast of appearance; the left having all the characteristics of the plain of the Ganges, being flat and rich like Bengal, while the right bank is formed by the end of the great salt range of hills, seen at Calabaugh on the Indus, and presents an extremely wild and rugged aspect. These mountains retain the red colour for which they are remarkable, and approach the edge of the river, which, being divided by islands, agrees exactly with the description of the ancients, particularly Quintus Curtius's delineation of the scene of the battle with Porus.—(*Elphinstone, &c.*)

AUGUR.—This is the name of a modern geographical subdivision of that portion of the province of Lahore situated between the Indus and Hydaspes, but respecting the topography of which very little is known, except that, according to native reports, it contains several salt mountains, with which indeed the soil of this part of Hindostan is everywhere impregnated. It is situated between the 32d and 33d degrees of north latitude, has the Indus to the west, and Sinde Sagor to the south, is thinly inhabited and contains no town of

note. In some old maps it is named Ghepp or Dun Ghepp.

DOABEH SINDE SAGOR (*Sindhu Sagara*).—This name is applied by Abul Fazel to distinguish the Doab of the Indus and Hydaspes or Jhylum, but properly refers to the southern portion of that natural division. In 1582, he described it as follows: "Circar Sindé Sagor, containing 42 mahals; measurement 1,409,979 begahs; revenue 51,912,201 dams; seyurghal 4,680 dams. This circar furnishes 8,553 cavalry, and 69,700 infantry." The little desert of the Indus extends from north to south above 250 miles; but the breadth varies, being in some places not more than 30, and in others above 100 miles broad. It occupies all that part of the country between the Hydaspes and the Indus, which is not overflowed by these rivers, and extends from the latitude of Ooch, where the inundated lands of both join, to the salt range of hills. In fact three-fourths of this Doab, including the above-mentioned district of Augur, come under the description of a desert.

Sinde Sagor is in part possessed by the Seiks and partly by the Afghans, the latter portion being distinguished by the name of Leia, under which head further information will be found. Sindé Singh is the term by which the inhabitants of the districts under the Seiks approaching to the Indus are known, and Nakai Singh is the name given to the Seiks who reside in the province of Mooltan. With the leaders of the Seiks in these territories, the extent of their possessions, or the climate and productions of the country under their rule, we are little acquainted; those in Mooltan, as well as those settled along the banks of the Jhylum, are said to be constantly engaged in predatory warfare, either with the officers of the Afghan government, or other Mahommedan chiefs, who have jaghires in this neighbourhood.—(*Elphinstone, Sir John Malcolm, &c. &c.*)

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DOABEH BARRY (*Bari, a residence*).—This Doab comprehends the low country between the Ravee and Beyah rivers, and by Abul Fazel in 1582, is described as follows: "Circar Doabeh Barry, containing 52 mahals, measurement 4,580,002 begahs; revenue 142,820,183 dams, seyurghal 3,923,922 dams." This country is also named Manjha, and the Seiks who inhabit it Manjha Singhs. It contains the cities of Lahore and Amritsir, and becomes in consequence the great centre of the power of the Seik nation. In 1806, Runjeet Singh of Lahore, Futteh Singh of Allawal, and Joodh Singh of Ramgadia, were the principal chiefs of the country, but the first since that period has swallowed up all the others. Towards the mountains this territory is described as less fertile than the Doabeh Jallinder, it must however from its geographical position possess nearly the same climate and soil.—(*Sir John Malcolm, Abul Fazel, &c.*)

AMRITSIR (*Amrita Saras, the fountain of nectar*).—The capital of the Seik nation and holy city of their religion, situated in lat. $31^{\circ} 33'$ N. long. $74^{\circ} 48'$ E. 44 miles E. from Lahore. This is an open town, about eight miles in circumference. The streets are narrow, and the houses in general good, being lofty and built of burned bricks, but the apartments are confined. Amritsir is the grand emporium of trade for the shawls and saffron of Cashmere, and a variety of other commodities from the Deccan and eastern parts of India. The Raja levies an excise on all the merchandize sold in the town, according to its value. The manufactures of the place are only a few coarse cloths and inferior silks. Owing to its being the resort of many rich merchants and the residence of bankers, Amritsir is considered as a place of opulence. The Seik Raja has built a new fort, which he has named after himself *Runjeet Ghur*, and he has also brought a narrow canal from the Ravee, a distance of 34 miles.

Amritsir, or the pool of immortality, from which the town takes its name, is a basin of about 135 paces square, built of burned bricks, in the centre of which stands a temple dedicated to Gooroo Govind Singh. In this sacred place is lodged, under a silken canopy, the book of laws written by that Gooroo. There are from 5 to 600 akalies, or priests, belonging to this temple, who are supported by contributions. When Ahmed Shah Abdalli came to Amritsir, he overthrew their temple twice, and killed cows and threw them into the water in order to defile it. Runjeet Singh has a mint here, at which different coins are struck in the name of their greatest saint Baba Nanak Shah. Good camels, and occasionally horses, are to be purchased here, the first at 50 rupees each. These valuable, patient, and ill-used animals are brought down with rock salt from a mine about 80 miles north of Lahore. Strings of 600 are seen on the road, with a large lump resembling a block of unwrought marble slung on each side.

Some Seik authorities ascribe the foundation of Amritsir to Gooroo Ramdass, (who died A. D. 1581), which is not correct, as it was a very ancient town known formerly under the name of Chak. Gooroo Ramdass added much to its population, and built the famous tank, or reservoir, named Amritsir, which in the course of time became the name of the town, it having been for some time called Ramdasspoor.—(*Sir John Malcolm, 11th Register, &c.*)

DOABEH JALLINDER (*Jalindra.*).—This Doab is concluded between the Sutleje and Beyah rivers, and the mountainous district of Cahlore, or Ghaolore. By Abul Fazel, in 1582, it is described as follows: “Circar Doabeh Beit Jallinder, containing 60 mahals; measurement 3,279,302 begahs, revenue 124,365,212 dams; seyurghal 2,651,788 dams. This circar furnishes 4,155 cavalry, and 79,536 infantry.”

This natural sub-division of the Lahore province, although of small dimensions, is, from the peculiarity of its geographical position, of considerable importance, as it is by this route that the imperial province of Delhi is to be most conveniently penetrated, the extent of fertile country being here circumscribed by the hills on the east and the desert on the west. It is also the most fruitful portion of the Sikh territory, and is not excelled in climate and strength of vegetation by any province in India. The soil is light but very productive, and the country, which is open and level, abounds with every kind of grain. The want of water, which is so much felt in the more westerly regions, is here unknown, as it is found everywhere in abundance, within two or three feet of the surface. The principal towns are Jallinder, Rahoon, and Bhutty.

This territory is principally occupied by the Malawa Singh Sikhs, who are called the Doabeh Singhs, or Singhs who dwell between two rivers. With these chiefs we are but little acquainted. In 1808, Tarah Singh was one of the most considerable, but he seems to have disappeared so early as 1812, when Boodh Singh of Jallinder, Futteh Singh of Allowalia, and Jodh Singh of Runguria, were the principal leaders. In that year Runjeet Singh of Lahore, taking advantage of their internal discord, attacked the possessions of the first, and captured his two principal fortresses, Jallinder and Bhutty. It is worthy of remark, as illustrating the political state of the Sikh community, that the instruments employed in the subjugation of this territory were the two chiefs last named, whose forces formed the largest body of cavalry in Runjeet's army, yet a defensive alliance was believed to exist between these three chiefs to resist conjointly the aggressions of Runjeet Singh. Under these circumstances two of them followed his standard to effect the destruction of the third, swayed by the delusion of protecting for a

short period their own downfall. On the other hand, the pride of Boodh Singh, the first mentioned, induced him to abandon without a struggle a tract of country yielding a revenue of 3 lacks of rupees per annum, rather than submit to a personal attendance on Runjeet Singh.—(*Sir David Ochterlony, Sir John Malcolm, Abul Fazel, &c. &c.*)

JALLINDER.—This was formerly a residence of the Afghans, and is still inhabited by some of their descendants subject to the Sikhs. Lat. $31^{\circ} 18'$ N. long. $75^{\circ} 40'$ E. 52 miles S. E. from Amritsir. The modern houses are mostly constructed from the ruinous materials of the houses formerly inhabited by the Afghans. In 1808, Jallinder was held in jaghire by two brothers at war with each other, in consequence of which they kept up a constant discharge of fire arms during the day, and at night set fire to each others corn fields. It was ultimately subdued by Runjeet, whose practice was to restore the towns and their dependencies to their former proprietors, where he met with no opposition, to be held by them as jaghires.—(*11th Register, &c.*)

X KISHTEWAR (*Cashthavar, abounding in wood.*)—A town and district in the north-eastern extremity of the Lahore province, bounded on three sides by the Cashmere and Himalaya mountains. The town is situated in lat. $33^{\circ} 58'$ N. long. $76^{\circ} 9'$ E. about 85 miles E. S. E. from the city of Cashmere. Respecting this remote quarter very little is known, except that it is very hilly and woody, as its name imports, but thinly peopled, and liable to extreme cold during the depth of winter. It is intersected by the Chinaub river, which has its source in the north-east corner, and is in some places 70 yards broad, with a rapid current. At the village of Nausman it is crossed in a basket slung to a rope, which is pulled along with its goods and passengers, and then back again. In 1783, this was one of the

few independent Hindoo districts remaining in India, yet the chief was a Mahommedan. It probably still remains independent, its rugged surface and harsh climate presenting few attractions to invaders.— (*Foster, &c. &c.*)

JAMBOE (*Jambhu.*)—A town and petty principality in the Kohistan of the Lahore province, the first situated in lat. $32^{\circ} 56'$ N. long. $74^{\circ} 38'$ E. 97 miles N. from Umritsir. The limits of the Jamboe Raja's territories fluctuate greatly according to circumstances, and he is generally tributary to the Sikhs. In 1783, the revenues of this principality were estimated at five lacks of rupees, besides the produce of Buddoo and Chandahnee, or Chinnanee. The face of the country is hilly and woody, and the greater portion thinly inhabited, owing to the incursions of the Sikhs and predatory habits of the natives. The road to the city of Jamboe in a south-west direction, lies through a defile of sand for many miles, the sides of which consist of lofty rocks nearly perpendicular.

The town of Jamboe stands on the side of a hill, and contains two distinct divisions, which are termed the upper and the lower towns. The bottom of the hill is washed by the Ravee, here about 40 or 50 yards broad, and fordable at most seasons of the year, with many water mills on its banks for grinding corn. In 1783, Jamboe was a town of considerable commercial resort, as it was then an entrepot between Cashmere and Hindostan; but so many changes have since that date taken place, that the trade has also probably undergone some mutation. The shawls then exported from Cashmere by this route were packed in bales of a certain weight and ascertained value, and were not subsequently opened until they reached their destined market. These bales were usually carried by men, natives of Cashmere, the precipitous nature of the country precluding the employment of cattle for that

purpose. Jamboe is noted for producing a white mulberry of an exquisite flavour.

How this little territory acquired a name (Jambhu) which in the ancient Hindoo mythological poems is used to designate all India (Jambhu Dwipa), we are not informed. In a some of these compositions allusion is made to a temple of the sun in Metrabana on the river Chandrabhaga (the Chinaub, or Acesines) alleged by modern pundits to have been situated somewhere near the modern town of Jamboe. The ancient Jambhu Dwipa is described as having been surrounded by a salt sea, and it is possible that the ocean may at one time have reached to the base of these mountains, forming the high table lands into islands.—(*Forster, F. Buchanan, &c. &c.*)

KANGRA (*Khankara*).—An ancient town and district situated in the Kohistan of the Lahore province, and variously named Kote Caungrah and Nagorcote. By Abul Fazel, in 1582, it is described as follows :

“Nagorcote is a city placed on a high mountain with a fort named Kangra. In the vicinity of this city upon a lofty mountain is a place called Maha Maya, which they (the Hindoos) consider as one of the works of the divinity, and come in pilgrimages to it from great distances, thereby obtaining the accomplishment of their wishes. It is most wonderful, that in order to effect this, they cut out their tongues, which grow again in the course of two or three days, and sometimes in a few hours. Physicians believe that when the tongue is cut out it will grow again ; but nothing except a miracle can effect it so speedily as is here mentioned.”

The fortress of Kangra (Cote Kangra) is situated in lat. 32° 15' N. long. 76° 8' E. 90 miles N. E. from Umritsir. The town of Kangra is open, and before the attack of Ammer Singh, contained about 2,000 houses. In the neighbourhood was the famous Hin-

doo temple above described, which was of great celebrity when the Mahommedans first invaded Hindostan, and which still retains its reputation for sanctity. By the Hindoos it is named Juwala Muchi. The Emperor Acber accomplished the reduction of this fort after a siege of a whole year, which he commanded in person, and he subsequently bestowed it on an officer who had distinguished himself. In 1783, the revenue of the territory attached to this town was estimated at seven lacks of rupees per annum. Although most parts of the Kangra country are high, the ascents from the plains below are not precipitous and the summits of the hills are level, so that a large proportion is fit for cultivation, and occupied. There is plenty of sugar cane, which requires a warm climate, and rice is so abundant as to be exported to Lahore; but the poor live mostly on maize. None of the original unconverted tribes remain; the Jaut is said to be the most numerous.

After the conquest of Serinagur in 1803 by the Nepaulese, their army proceeded in the direction of Lahore, but were stopped in their progress by this fortress, which then belonged to Raja Sunsar Chund. It is situated on a steep mountain, about 30 miles to the west of the Beyah river, is well supplied with water, and contains ground sufficient to yield a subsistence to the garrison consisting of 3 or 4,000 men. Finding it impossible to effect its reduction by a coup-de-main, the siege was converted into a blockade, which continued with more or less strictness until 1810, when the Gorkhas, under Ammer Sigh Thappa, were compelled to raise the siege by the approach of an army under Raja Runjeet Singh of Lahore. For this assistance the Kangra Raja paid dearly, as he was obliged to cede both the town and fortress of Kangra and the fort of Kotla to Runjeet, with a territory to the value of 50,000 rupees per annum. At that time

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Gholaum Mahommed the Rohillah, who fought against Sir Robert Abercrombie in 1794, served in the pay of the Kangra Raja.

In 1810, the Raja of Kangra, Sunsar Chund, forwarded an address to Lord Minto, purporting that in the event of the Punjab country coming under the British dominion, he might be guaranteed in the territory then held by him, as well as of the places which had been wrested from him by the Nepaulese. He was informed in reply that the British government entertained no design of invading the Punjab, or of subjugating the Sikhs, being always disposed to maintain the relations of amity with all the surrounding chiefs and states, unless their hostile conduct compelled an appeal to arms, and that under these circumstances his Lordship was precluded from a compliance with the Raja's application.—(*Forster, F. Buchanan, Sir D. Ochterlony, &c. &c. &c.*)

NADONE (*Nadaun*).—One of the principal towns of the Kangra country, of which it is at present the capital, and standing on the south side of the Beyah river 87 miles E. N. E. from Umritsir. Lat. $31^{\circ} 55' N.$ long. $76^{\circ} 11' E.$ The district attached to Nadone is a mountainous tract of country, which borders on the Punjab, and is at present tributary to Raja Runjeet Singh of Lahore. In 1806 it was overrun by the Gorkhas of Nepaul, who then obtained possession of the town, from which they were subsequently expelled. The town is said to contain only 500 houses.—(*Sir John Malcolm, Forster, &c. &c.*)

SUJANPOOR.—A considerable town containing about 2,000 houses, situated on the east bank of the Beyah river, 30 miles E. of Kangra. According to native authorities it is surrounded by lines 12 coss in circumference.—(*F. Buchanan, &c.*)

COOLOO (*Culu*).—According to native authorities the country of Cooloo lies due north of Kangra, and

is separated from Chamba by the Pariyat mountains. It is watered in the centre by the Beyah, but the territory extends to the Suttleje. It is said to be cold, mountainous, and barren, but furnishing much sheep pasture, and there is said to be a good communication from hence to Tibet.

In 1814, the Raja Beckram Sen of Cooloo availed himself of the troubled state of the country to the east of the Suttleje, to obtain possession of some strongholds, from which, after the expulsion of the Gorkhas by the British arms, it became necessary to dislodge him. A correspondence in consequence took place between him and the British commissioner, Lieut. Ross, which, after considerable demur, and the necessity of menacing him with the employment of force, terminated in his evacuating the posts east of that river, except one or two, his right to which was admitted. Some barren peaks, which the Cooloo Raja wished to retain, were considered by him of much more importance, than their appearance indicated, from their being situated within the protection of the British government, which is precluded by treaty from crossing the Suttleje. These spots he considered as so many asylums for himself and subjects, and depositaries for their effects. As soon as this question was settled, and no risk existed of a mark of favour being misconstrued, the British commissioner was authorized to make him a pecuniary donation of 5,000 rupees, as a compensation for expenses incurred during the campaign against the Gorkhas, in which he had co-operated, and he was at the same time presented with some articles of European manufacture.

About twenty-five years ago, Cooloo was the principal channel through which the shawl trade was carried on with Upper Hindostan, and the raw material from Lahdack still passes through Cooloo, from whence, by a skilful arrangement, it might be made to

pass into the British dominions, in place of the more expensive and circuitous route of Umritsir.—(*Public MS. Documents, Lieut. Ross, F. Buchanan, &c. &c.*)

MUNDI.—South from Cooloo is Mundi, said to be a smaller country, but of superior fertility, and possessing one mine of iron, and another of culinary salt, probably rock salt, and full of impurities. The two mines are said to yield the Raja 150,000 rupees per annum, and the land revenue about the same amount. The chief's name in 1810 was Iswari Sen, and his capital Mundi was then reckoned to contain 1,000 houses. *Camaulghur* situated on a great hill towards the southern frontier is reckoned a strong place.—(*F. Buchanan, &c.*)

CHAPTER. II.

THE RIVERS OF THE PUNJAUB.

The River Indus, (*Sindhu*)—Jylum River, (*or Hydaspes*)—Chenaub River, (*or Acesines*)—Ravee (*Iravati*) River, (*or Hydraotes*)—Beyah (*Vipasa*) River, (*the Hyphasis*) Sutledge River, (*Satadru, with a hundred bellies or Channels.*)

THE RIVER INDUS (*Sindhu*).—The source of the Indus still remains unexplored, but of late years much information has been collected by travellers and others regarding its course and origin. At present probable conjecture fixes its commencement in the northern declivity of the Cailas branch of the Himalaya mountains, about lat. $31^{\circ} 30'$ N. long. $80^{\circ} 30'$ E. not far from the Chinese town of Gortope, and within a few miles of Lake Rawanshead, and the sources of the Suttleje. The stream of the Indus has been traced with certainty only to the neighbourhood of Draus, a town in Little Tibet (lat. $35^{\circ} 20'$ N. long. 76° E.), where, according to the testimony of the natives, two great branches join eight days march for a caravan N. N. E. from the town of Cashmere. The left of these branches they describe as being 70 yards broad a little above the junction, and excessively rapid, flowing from the north of east, with a wooden bridge across it. Other accounts assert that the confluence takes place two marches above Draus, and that at, or below Draus, it is separated into two

streams ; the lesser, named the Little Sinder, running south to Cashmere, while the course of the greater remained unknown, but was distinguished by the name of the Great Sinder. The main stream which passes Draus, coming from the north of east, is supposed to flow near to Lahdack, the capital of Little Tibet, to which point from Gortope its current is conjectured to flow for nearly 400 miles from S. S. E. ; but its course above Draus is wholly conjectural, its channel higher up, owing to the difficult and desolate nature of the country, having never been explored.

From Draus the Indus pursues its solitary course for above 200 miles through a rude and mountainous country to Mullai, where after it has penetrated through the great Hindoo Coosh chain, it receives from the north-west the Abbaseen, and subsequently proceeds for 50 miles through the lower hills of the Hindoo Coosh to Torbaila (40 miles above Attock), where it enters the valley of Chuch, spreading and forming innumerable islands. About forty miles lower down, it receives the Cabul river, and soon after rushes through a narrow opening into the midst of the branches of the Soliman range of mountains. Even when the water is at the lowest, the junction of these rivers, and their course through the rocks before they penetrate the mountains, cause waves and eddies, and occasion a sound like that of the sea ; but when their volume is swelled by the melting of the snow, a tremendous whirlpool is created, the roaring of which may be heard at a great distance. It frequently swallows up boats, or dashes them to pieces on the rocks. The two black rocks in this part of the river, named Jellalia and Kemalia, are pointed out by the inhabitants as the transformed bodies of the two sons of Peeree Taruk (the apostle of darkness), the founder of the Roushenia sect, who were thrown into the river by Akhoond, the dervise and theological opponent of

their father. In 1809, the Indus was forded above its confluence with the Cabul river by Sultan Shah Shuja, but this was considered an extraordinary event, there being no other ford of the Indus known, from the place where it issues from the mountains to its junction with the ocean.

The Indus which above is so widely spread out in the plain, at Attock is contracted to 260 yards, but deep and rapid. When the floods are highest, it rises to the top of a bastion from 35 to 40 feet high, but does not then expand above 50 yards more. Lower down where it enters the hills it becomes still narrower, and Neelaub, a town 15 miles below Attock, is said to be only a stone's throw across, but exceedingly deep and rapid. From Neelaub it winds among the hills to Caulabaugh, where it passes through the salt range in a deep, clear, and tranquil stream, and from thence pursues a southerly course to the ocean, without being again shut in or interrupted by hills. On the contrary, after passing Caulabaugh it expands over the plain into various channels, which meet and separate again, but are rarely united into one body.

Below Attock the Indus receives the Toe and other brooks, but no stream of any magnitude until it is joined by the Koorum river at Kaggawala, where its bed is broad but very shallow. The only river that flows into the Indus from the west, south of this point is the Arul ; but it supplies little water, as its stream is mostly drawn off for the purposes of irrigation in the north of the Damaun district, and never reaches the Indus unless when swelled by monsoon rains. At Kaheree ghaut, in lat. $31^{\circ} 28' N$. the breadth of the Indus at two points was found to be 1010 and 905 yards on the 6th of January, a period of the year when the stream is at the lowest. The deep part of the channel was not above 100 yards across, and only

about 12 feet to the bottom, an elephant not having about 100 yards to swim ; but at this place the main channel is considerably reduced by the previous separation of several large branches, which run nearly parallel to the main stream. One of them from its right bank is fordable only in a few places, and 202 yards broad. Another considerable branch was 50 yards broad, and there were besides two inferior branches. In that vicinity the banks of the Indus are very low, that is, the inner banks seldom exceed six feet, generally only four or five, and during the rainy season the river overflows them, and expands in many places to 15 miles. It appears evident also that the former channel ran seven miles more to the eastward.

The islands and low country, which are inundated during the monsoon, consist of rich black clay, in some parts well cultivated, while others are overgrown with high grass jungle, in patches of which the labourers have temporary huts. The bed of the Indus is sand, with a small quantity of mud, and its water resembles that of the Ganges. There are many quicksands, and the islands are for the most part covered with long jhow jungle. For 70 miles above Mittenda Kāt (lat. $28^{\circ} 35' N.$) where it receives the Punjnad, (a river formed by the union of the Punjab waters, which, although of great bulk, is much inferior to the Indus above the junction,) the two immense streams run parallel, and at Ooch, which is 50 miles up, the distance across is not above ten miles. In the months of July and August this intervening space is one complete sheet of water, the villages, with a few exceptions, being only temporary erections, and such appears to be the nature of the whole country it traverses, through Sind to Hydrabad the capital. On the left bank are some considerable towns and villages, where canals have been cut for the pur-

poses of agriculture ; but, notwithstanding this super-excellent inland navigation, owing to political causes, there is scarcely any trade carried on between Sind and the countries to the north. In the time of Aurangzebe a considerable trade subsisted, which has long ceased. The course and depth of the river have never been examined in a satisfactory manner, but according to native report there is, from the Gulph of Cutch to Lahore, a distance of 760 geographical miles, sufficient water to float a vessel of 200 tons burthen ; the passage down from Lahore to the sea occupying only 12 days. Of the five rivers which give the name to the Punjaub, the Indus is not considered as one, being rather the trunk, or stock, into which the streams of Cabul and Lahore flow.

Seventeen miles to the south of Bhukor (lat. 27° 19'), the Indus sends off a branch to the westward, which performs a circuit, and rejoins the main body at the town of Sehwan, 50 miles below the point of separation. This branch is known by the name of the Kumburgundee, or Larkhan river, and at one place spreads into a lake, ten or twelve miles across, situated near the base of the Brahooick mountains. The insulated territory is named Chandooke, and is one of the most fertile in the Sind dominions.

The Fulalee branch of the Indus, which flows east, is of very considerable size, and encircles the island on which Hyderabad stands. Ascending the Fulalee, from its junction with the Indus up to Hyderabad, it winds so much that although the direct distance by land is not more than 14 miles, the route by water is not less than 24. The depth of water in this part of the route, during the month of August, is from four to six fathoms, and there are many villages scattered on each side of the river. At its most eastern winding it detaches the Goonee branch, which at one time joined the ocean, about a degree to the eastward of the grand

trunk of the Indus ; but in 1799, Futteh Ali, a late Ameer, for the purposes of irrigation, threw an embankment across it at Alibunder, and now fresh water presses the dam on the upper side, while the tide flows up to the lower. The river below the dam is called Lonee, or salt. The water in all these minor branches of the Indus appears annually to decrease, and the bed of the stream to become shallower.

After the Fulalee rejoins the Indus, the course is for some miles south, at last deviating to the south-west, in which direction it may be said to enter the ocean in one vast volume. As it approaches the estuary, several minor streams branch off from the main trunk, but they never reach the sea, being absorbed by the sands of the desert, lost in an enormous salt morass, or abstracted by the natives for agricultural uses. From the sea up to Hyderabad, the Indus is in general about a mile in breadth, varying in depth from two to five fathoms ; at Lahore Bunder it is four miles broad ; still further down, at Dharajay Bunder, nine miles, and at the extreme of the land 12 miles from shore to shore. It is a remarkable circumstance that the tides are not perceptible in the Indus at a greater distance than 60 or 65 miles from the sea. At the mouth the bore, or sudden influx of the tide, is high and dangerous, and the velocity of its current has been estimated at four miles per hour, but this must vary greatly at different places. Like the Nile and Ganges, the Indus is always described as having a Delta, but at present, except perhaps during the height of the rains, the expression does not apply, and the river cannot with propriety be said to have more than one mouth. Neither does the space of land, miscalled the Delta, possess the rich soil and luxuriant vegetation seen near the debouchure of the more sacred stream. On the contrary, as the sea is approached, the dry parts exhibit nothing but short scrubby brushwood, the re-

mainder, and much the larger portion, arid sand, noisome saline swamps, or shallow salt lakes.

In Hindostan there are four rivers, which were once much dreaded by religious people. It was forbidden even to touch the waters of the Caramnassa, to bathe in the Caratoya (a river in Bengal called *Curvatya* in the maps), to swim in the Gunduck, and to cross the Attock. The prohibition may, however, be evaded by crossing the Indus above its confluence with the Attock. In Acber's reign a body of Rajpoots, with attendant Brahmins, crossed the Indus to chastise some refractory Patan tribes, and Brahmins who live in Hindostan cross it daily without any scruple. There are other Brahmins and Hindoos of all denominations who cross it daily to visit the holy places in the west ; but these persons have renounced the world, and retain but few practices of their castes. Though highly respected, nobody presumes to eat or communicate with them ; but they go in crowds to receive their blessing.

This river is called the Sindhu, or Sindhus, in Sanscrit, and Aub Sinde, or the water of Sinde, by the Persians and Abul Fazel, who says that " according to some, it rises between Cashmere and and Cashgar, while others place its source in Khatai. It runs through the territories of Sewad, Attock/ Benares, + Chowpareh, and the territory of the Balooches." From Attock downwards to Mooltan, this river has obtained the name of Attock, and further down that of Soor, or Shoor, but it is generally known to Asiatics by the name of the Sinde. From the length of its course, and the greatness of its volume, the Indus must be reckoned among the largest rivers in the world, many of its tributary streams being little inferior in magnitude to some of the most considerable rivers of Europe, and its channel, for 900 miles, from Attock to the sea, presents a strong and distinct barrier to the

west against external invasion. It does not appear, however, that it ever attained that celebrity and sanctity among the Hindoos which they have, without any apparent reason, attached to many inferior streams, yet there is every reason to believe, that when first crossed by the Mahommedans, both banks were inhabited by sects of the Brahminical persuasion, of course equally interested in supporting its reputation ; but it probably then, as now, flowed through a sterile uninteresting soil, and never attracted the attention of a poet or divine. As is stated in the beginning of this description, the distance of its course from the sea has never been traced more than 1350 miles, but there is reason to suppose that the total length of its course, including windings, will not fall short of 1700 miles.—(*Elphinstone, Macartney, Pottinger, Rennell, Wilford, &c. &c. &c.*)

JHYLUM RIVER (*or Hydaspes.*)—This river has its source in the south-eastern corner of the Cashmere valley, is there called the Vedusta, and proceeding nearly due west passes the capital of that province, where it is joined by a small stream from the Ouller lake. Twelve miles below that town it is joined by the Little Sinde, and by many smaller rivers during its course through the hills and vallies, which it enters at Baramoola, and four miles below Muzifferabad it receives the Kishengunga coming from the northward. Thus far its course is nearly due west ; but from hence it makes a great curve to the south, and near the town of Jhylum (lat. 33° 3') is little known, the country being so excessively mountainous that it is frequented by few travellers. The Jhylum in its course through the hills is very rapid, and from one to 600 yards broad ; but it is not fordable at any season, although men and horses have only from 15 to 20 yards to swim. After a course of 450 miles it joins the Chinaub at Tremmoo Ghaut, 20 miles below Jhung, and 100

above Mooltan, and after the conflux ceases to have a distinct name.

Fifty miles lower down, these united streams receive the Ravee, near Fazel Shah and Ahmedpoor, and flow on, passing the city of Mooltan about four miles and a half to the north; the combined streams retaining the name of Chinaub to within eight miles of Ooch at Sheeneebukree, where they are joined by the Gurrah, or united waters of the Beyah and Sutleje, 115 miles, including windings, below Mooltan, and 60 miles below Bahawulpoor. From this point to Mittenda Kat, where they fall into the Indus, a distance of 90 miles, these five rivers, now forming one, take the name of the Punjnud, and for the above distance run nearly parallel to their ultimate reservoir, the Indus, the distance across seldom exceeding ten miles. During the rains the last-mentioned space is one entire sheet of water. This river, the most westerly of the Punjab streams, is by Abul Fazel named the Behut, or Bedusta, in ancient Hindoo mythological poems the Indrani, and is the famous Hydaspes of Alexander. It is reckoned the second largest of the Punjab rivers, its breadth at Jellalpoor (lat. $32^{\circ} 40'$) in the month of August being 1800 yards, with a depth of 14 feet, and the length of its course from its origin to its injunction with the Indus, about 150 miles, including windings.—(*Macartney, Rennell. &c. &c. &c.*)

CHINAUB RIVER (*or Acesines.*)—This river has its source on the southern declivity of the Himalaya chain of mountains, near the south-east corner of Cashmere, in the Alpine district of Kishtewar, from whence it flows in a south-westerly direction until it unites with the Jhyllum or Hydaspes at Tremmoo ghaut. Lat. $30^{\circ} 55' N$,

The Chinaub is the largest Punjab stream. At Vizerabad ghaut (50 miles north from the city of Lahore) on the 31st of July, 1809, it measured one mile, three furlongs, and 20 perches across, 14 feet deep, with

a current of about five miles per hour ; but at the same place, in the dry season, its channel does not exceed 300 yards across. There is not any ford ascertained to the south of the hills, but like the Jhyllum it is easily crossed at the points where the banks are low and the bed wide, there being only a short distance to swim in the centre. The banks of the Chinaub above, are low and well wooded ; but the trees are so small, that the timber for boat building is floated down from the hills, 150 miles further up, where it is abundant. The oblique distance from Jelalpoor ghaut to Vizie-rabad across the Doab of the Jhyllum and Chinaub is 44 miles ; the country level and the soil good, but chiefly under pasture.

The ancient Hindoo name of this river was the Chandra Bhaga or Chandra Sarita, and is considered as the Acesines of Alexander. Its junction with Jhyllum is effected with great noise and violence, which circumstance is noticed both by the historians of Alexander and Timour. By Abul Fazel, in 1582, it is described as follows : “ Another river of Lahore is the Chinaub, called also Chunderbahka (Chandra Bhaga). From the top of the mountains of Khutwar (Kishtewar) issue two springs, one called Chunder, and the other Bahka. In the neighbourhood of Khutwar they unite their streams, and are then called Chunderbahka ; from thence they flow on to Belolipoor, Sooderah, and Hezareh.”—The course of the Chinaub from the snowy mountains, to which it has been traced, to its junction with the Indus at Mittenda Kat, may, including windings, be estimated at 650 miles.—(*Rennell, Macartney, Wilford, &c. &c.*)

RAVEE (*Iravati*) RIVER (*or Hydraotes*).—This is the third river of the Punjab, and the Hydraotes of Alexander’s historians. Its source has never been satisfactorily ascertained ; but it issues from the mountainous districts of Lahore, near the declivity of the Himalaya mountains, from whence it flows in a

south-westerly direction, and enters the plains near Rajepoor, from which point the canal of Shahnehr (now extinct) was formerly drawn to Lahore, a distance of about 80 miles in length. This canal was intended, besides the purposes of irrigation, to supply the city of Lahore with water during the dry season, when most of the Indian rivers are from 20 to 30 feet below the level of their banks. At Meannee ghaut on the 12th of August, 1809, when it had attained its greatest height, the breadth was found to be only 513 yards, the deepest part 12 feet, and not above 40 yards across. In the cold season it is here fordable, not having above four feet of water. In this vicinity it has many quicksands and its banks are low, but well wooded. The oblique distance from Vizierabad ghaut on the Chinaub to Meannee ghaut on the Ravee, is 55 miles. This Doab is flat land, with a tolerable good soil, although more elevated than the Doab of the Chinaub and Jhylum.

After entering the plains, the course of the Ravee continues south-west until it passes the city of Lahore, and from thence in the same direction, latterly inclining more to the west, until it unites with the combined waters of the Chinaub and Jhylum, near Ahmedpoor, 40 miles above the city of Mooltan, after which their rapidity and breadth are particularly noticed by the historians of Alexander and Timour. In point of volume of water this is the least of the Punjab, and the whole length of its course, from its commencement to its final junction with the Indus, probably does not exceed 580 miles, including windings.—(*Macartney, Rennell, &c. &c.*)

BEYAH (*Vipasa*) RIVER (*the Hyphasis*).—This is the fourth river of the Punjab, and the Hyphasis of Alexander's historians. The Beas Gunga and Ban Gunga are said to form the Beyah; the first passing Kote Kaungra to the southward, and the latter to the northward in a westerly direction, joining at Huree-

poor, one march below the fort. The Ban Gunga is said to separate near the fort, one passing on each side and uniting below so as to form an island. Abul Fazel writes, that the source of the Beyah, named Abyekoond, is in the mountains of Keloo in the pergunnah of Sultanpoor. After issuing from the hills, the current of this river flows in a south-westerly direction, and at Bhirowal ghaut in 1809, when the floods were at the highest, measured 740 yards across, the stream passing with a rapid current, and having a high bank on the right side. In the cold season it is here fordable in most places, but in its bed are many quicksands, and when the waters are low, many islands and sand banks are left exposed. Timber in this vicinity is scarce and of small dimensions, and the boats at the above named ghaut of extremely bad construction, more resembling rafts than boats. They are made flat bottomed, with one plank all round, and do not draw above six inches water, which is so far in their favour.

The Beyah joins the Sutleje 35 miles below Bhirowal near the village of Hurrak and not far from Ferozepoor; after which conjunction, the united streams are first named Beas, and further on Gurrah, by which appellation it is also known at Gordeean ghaut, near Pakputtun, 160 miles above Bahawalpoor and 100 S. S. W. from Lahore. The Beyah and Sutleje at their junction are nearly the same size, but the latter is rather the largest. Their course also is nearly the same from the snowy ridge 150 miles to their junction, and 260 more to where they unite with the aggregated waters of the Jhyllum, Chinaub, and Ravee. The total length of its course, including windings, may be estimated at 590 miles. In 1805, Lord Lake pursued Jeswunt Row Holcar to the banks of this river, when he sued for peace, and a treaty was concluded on the 24th of December of that year.—(*Macartney, Rennell, &c. &c.*)

SUTLEJE RIVER (*Satadru*, with a hundred bellies or channels.)—The fifth river of the Punjab, and the Hyphasis of Alexander's historians. When Mr. Moorcroft visited lake Manasarovara, he was informed by the natives in the vicinity that near the southwestern extremity of that sacred pool there issued a river, which, proceeding in a westerly direction, passes along the Rawanshead lake, and, flowing again from its western extremity, forms the first branch of the Sutleje. Mr. Moorcroft, however, was of opinion, that Lake Manasarovara sends out no river or even stream to the south, north, or west, although the impression of all parties seems to be that it has its source within the gigantic range of Himalaya mountains, through which it penetrates, and more recent inquiries rather tend to confirm the assertions of the natives. By Abul Fazel, in 1582, it is described as follows: "The Sutleje, formerly called Shetooder, whose source is in the mountains of Ghahlore. Roo-per, Matchwareh, and Ludeeanna are situated on its banks. After having passed these places, it runs to Bowh ferry, where it unites with the river Beyah, anciently called Beypasha."

The Sutleje appears to be the largest of the rivers flowing within the mountains of Northern Hindostan, having been found to be at Rampoor, in Bussaher, at the narrowest point, 210 feet wide in the month of June, and very deep. At Bellaspoor, about 60 miles further down, its breadth is 300 feet. From the lake to its junction with the Beyah may be estimated at 500 miles; thence to its confluence with the Indus 400; to which 500 more being added for its progress to the Ocean, would give a total journey of 1,400 miles, and entitle it to a high station among streams claiming rank from their length of course. Much, however, remains to be ascertained respecting the course of this hundred-bellied stream through the mountains above Bellaspoor, and even between Ludeeanna and Bellaspoor.—(*Moorcroft, Rennell, &c. &c.*)

CHAPTER III.

THE PROVINCE OF CASHMERE.

Boundary—Climate—Production—Lakes—Mountains—Religion—
Shawl Manufacture—Trade and Commerce—Revenue—Literature—
Population—Manners and Customs, &c. &c. &c.

THE valley of Cashmere is comprehended between the 34th and 35th degrees of north latitude, and surrounded by lofty mountains which separate it from Little Tibet on the north; from Lahdack on the east; from Lahore on the south; and Puckely on the west. On the north-west a branch of the Speen, or white Caffres, approaches Cashmere. The valley is of an elliptic form and widens gradually to Islamabad, where the breadth is about 40 miles, which is continued with little variation to the town of Sampre, whence the mountains, by a regular inclination to the westward, come to a point and separate Cashmere from Muzifferabad. Including the surrounding mountains, Cashmere may be estimated at 110 miles in length by 60, the extreme breadth; the figure nearly an oval. The limits of Cashmere towards the west, adjoining Muzifferabad, are terminated by a low thick wood, the edge of which is skirted by a rivulet; and on the other side rises a chain of lofty mountains stretching to the north and south. There are seven passes into the province, four from the south, one from the west, and the remaining two from the north. That of Bember

is the best, but that of Muzifferabad is most frequent-ed. By Abul Fazel in 1582, this province is described as follows :—

“ The soubah of Cashmere is situated partly in the third and partly in the fourth climate. It is composed of Cashmere, Bhember, Sewad, Bijore, Candahar, and Zabulistan (Cabul). Formerly it had Ghizni, but now it has Cabul for its capital. The length from Kimber-dine to Kishengunge is 120 coss, and the breadth from 10 to 25 coss. On the east lies Peeristaun and the river Chinaub; on the south-east Bankul, and the mountains of Jummoo; on the north-east Great Tibet; on the west Puckoli and Kishengunge; on the south-west the territory of Gucker; and on the north-west Little Tibet. It is encompassed on all sides with lofty mountains. There are 26 roads into Hindostan, but those of Bember and Puckoli are the best, being passable for horses. x

“The whole of Cashmere represents a garden in perpetual spring, and the fortifications with which nature has furnished it are of an astonishing height. The water is remarkably good, and the cataracts are magnificent. It rains and snows here at the same season, as in Tartary and Persia; and during the periodical rains in Hindostan, light showers also fall here. The land is partly marshy, the rest well watered by streams and lakes. Violets, roses, narcissuses, and innumerable other flowers grow wild. Earthquakes are very frequent, on which account the houses are built of wood. The inhabitants subsist chiefly on rice, fresh and dried fish, and vegetables, and they drink wine. Their horses are small, but hardy; they breed neither camels nor elephants, both being unsuited to the nature of the country. In their cities and towns are neither snakes, scorpions, nor other venomous reptiles; but the country in general abounds with flies, gnats, bugs, and lice. Most of the trade of the

country is carried on by water, but great burdens are also transported on men's shoulders.

"The Cashmerians have a language of their own, but their books are written in the Sanscrit tongue, although the character be sometimes Cashmerian. They write chiefly upon tooz, which is the bark of a tree. The Mahommedans are partly Sunnies, and others are of the sects of Ali and Noorbukshay. There are many delightful singers, but they want variety. The Hindoos regard the whole of Cashmere as holy land: 45 places are dedicated to Siva; 64 to Vishnu; 3 to Brahma; and 22 to Durga, the wife of Siva. In 700 places, figures of snakes are carved, which they also worship.

"Although formerly government was said to take only a third of the produce of the soil, yet in fact the husbandman was not left in the enjoyment of nearly one-third. His Majesty (Acher) has now commanded that the crops shall be equally divided between the husbandman and the state. There are but few troops in Cashmere, the native standing army being only 4,892 cavalry, and 92,400 infantry.

"The ancients divided Cashmere into two parts only, calling the eastern division Meraje, and the western Kamraje. In the history of Cashmere, it is said, that in the early ages of the world, all Cashmere, except the mountains, was covered with water, and was then named Suttysir. Suttysir is one of the names of Siva's wife, and sir signifies a reservoir. In the year of the Hijera 948 (A. D. 1541), Mirza Hyder was sent against Cashmere by the Emperor Humayoon, and, by the help of some of the natives, conquered the whole of that country, and part of Great Tibet." Such is the description of this interesting province as it existed 300 years ago, since which period, it has probably, in every respect, greatly retrograded.

The lower range of mountains which surround Cashmere are of a moderate height, and covered with

trees and verdure, affording excellent pasturage for all sorts of cattle and wild graminivorous animals, and containing none of the larger and more ferocious carnivorous animals, such as lions and tigers. Beyond this range are mountains of a more stupendous elevation, whose snow-clad tops, soaring above the clouds and fogs, appear perpetually bright and luminous. By ascending from the plains up the mountains, any degree of cold may be attained. From these mountains flow innumerable cascades and rivulets, which the inhabitants conduct through their rice fields for the purposes of irrigation, and in their course from small lakes and canals, the junction of which afterwards forms streams navigable for boats of considerable magnitude, even within the limits of Cashmere, and increasing as they flow southward from the Jhyllum or Hydaspes, one of the largest rivers by which Hindostan is fertilized. Among these mountains are many romantic vallies, the inhabitants of which have scarcely any communication with those of the plains, and on account of their poverty and inaccessible residence have never been subjugated by any of the conquerors who have devastated Cashmere. The religion of these primitive tribes is unknown, but it is probably some modification of the Brahminical, or Buddhist tenets.

The valley of Cashmere is celebrated throughout Asia for the romantic beauty of its situation, the fertility of its soil, and the temperature of its atmosphere. It is generally of a level surface, and being copiously watered, yields abundant crops of rice, which is the common food of the inhabitants. The facility of procuring water insures the crop against the injuries of a drought, and the mildness of the climate against the scorching effect of the sun. Near the base of the surrounding hills where the land is higher, wheat, barley, and various other grains are cultivated. In this province are found most of the plants, fruits,

flowers, and forest trees, common to Europe, particularly the apple, pear, plum, apricot, and nut trees, and abundance of grapes; and in the gardens are many kitchen herbs peculiar to cold countries. A superior sort of saffron is also cultivated in Cashmere and iron of an excellent quality is found in the mountains. The sengerah, or water nut, which grows in the lakes, forms a considerable portion of the food of the lower classes. Many lakes are spread over the country, and there is a tradition, which appearances tend to confirm, that the Cashmere valley was once the bed of a large lake, which at last opened itself a passage into Hindostan by the river Jhyllum. Besides this river which intersects the whole province from east to west, there are numberless mountain streams supplied by the rains, which fall with great violence from June to October, forming many cascades and small cataracts which are precipitated into the valley, where the periodical rains are described as only descending in gentle showers.

The wealth and fame of Cashmere have greatly arisen from the manufacture of shawls, the wool of which is not the growth of the country, but brought from the high table land of Tibet, where alone the shawl goat producing it will thrive. Neither the Delhi emperors, who made various attempts to introduce this species of goat into the upper provinces of India, nor the sovereigns of Persia, whose dominions were still more favourably situated, have ever been able to succeed in procuring wool of an equally fine quality with that of Tibet. The Persian shawl, from the wool of Kerman, comes nearer the Cashmere shawl than the English. This raw material of the Cashmere shawl is rather a down than a wool, being protected by the exterior coarse hair. It is originally of a dark grey colour, and is bleached in Cashmere by the help of a preparation of rice flour. That from

Rodauk is reckoned the best, and the price in Cashmere is from ten to twenty rupees per turrak ; a weight supposed equal to about 12 pounds, and the whitest is most in demand. It is difficult to fix with any accuracy the number of shawls manufactured in the year. The number of looms (each occupying three men) employed, is said to be 16,000. Supposing, on an average, five shawls of all descriptions made at each shop or loom annually, the total would amount to 80,000, which is probably not very remote from the truth. The following is the process :—

The shop consists of a kind of frame work, at which the persons employed sit on a bench, in number from two to four. On plain shawls only two persons are employed ; and a long, narrow, but heavy shuttle is used : those of which the pattern is variegated are worked with wooden needles, there being a separate needle for the threads of each colour ; for the latter no shuttle is required. The operation of their manufacture is slow proportioned to the quantity of work in the patterns.

The oostaud, or head workman, superintends, while his journeymen are employed near him under his directions. If they have any new pattern in hand, or one with which they are not familiar, he describes to them the figure, colour, and threads that are to be used, while he keeps before him the pattern on which they happen to be employed, drawn on paper. During the operation, the rough side of the shawl is uppermost on the frame, notwithstanding which, the head workman never mistakes the regularity of the most finished patterns. A shop may be occupied with one shawl above a year, provided it be a remarkably fine one, while other shops make six or eight in the course of that time. Of the best and most noted sorts, not so much as a quarter of an inch is completed in one day by three persons, which is the usual num-

ber employed. Shawls containing much work are made in separate pieces at different shops, and it may be observed, that it very rarely happens when the pieces are completed, that they correspond in size.

The wages of the head workmen (the employer furnishing the materials) are from 6 to 8 pice per day ; of the common workmen from 1 to 4 pice, which currency in Cashmere may be valued at three halfpence each. When a merchant enters into the trade he frequently engages several shops, which he collects in a spot under his own eye, or he supplies the head workmen with thread, which has been spun by women and previously coloured ; and they carry on the manufacture at their own homes, having beforehand received instructions from the merchant respecting the quality of the goods he may require, their colours, patterns, &c. After the goods are finished the merchant carries them to the custom house, where each shawl is stamped and pays a certain duty, the amount of which is settled according to the value and quality of the piece. The officer of government generally fixes the value beyond what the goods are in reality worth, the duty levied in this estimate is one-fifth. Most shawls are exported from Cashmere unwashed, and fresh from the loom. Umritsir is the great shawl mart, and there they are better washed and packed than in Cashmere ; but of those sent to the westward many are worn unwashed.

The Cashmerians also fabricate the best writing paper of the east, which was formerly an article of extensive traffic, as were its lackered ware, cutlery and sugar ; but trade of all sorts is now in a very languid state. A wine resembling Madeira is manufactured in this province, and a spirituous liquor is also distilled from the grape. Umritsir in Lahore, the Sikh capital, is at present the grand emporium for the shawls and saffron of Cashmere. About twelve years

ago the Russian merchants penetrated from the north into Cashmere with their goods, by the route of Yarkund. The boats of Cashmere are long and narrow, and are moved with paddles. The country being intersected with numerous streams navigable for small vessels, might greatly benefit under a better government by this commodious internal conveyance. As there are no regular caravanserais, commercial strangers are generally lodged by their brokers.

In the time of Aurengzebe the revenue collected (probably the clear revenue) in Cashmere was $3\frac{1}{2}$ lacks of rupees per annum ; in 1783, the Afghan governor, on the part of the Cabul sovereign, extorted above 20 lacks. In 1809, the gross revenue was said to be 46,26,300 rupees, or about half a million sterling. The sum receivable by the Cabul King depends on his contract with the governor, and the governor's inclination to perform its conditions. When at the highest it amounted to 2,20,00,000 rupees, from which a deduction of 7,00,000 was allowed for the pay of the troops, so that only 1,50,00,000 lacks, reached the royal treasury. Above six lacks were then assigned to the neighbouring Rajas, to Afghan chiefs and to moullahs, dervises, and Hindoo fakeers. The rest is charged to the real or alleged expenses of collection, and to the support of the establishment.

The governor of Cashmere, while in subordination to the Sovereign of Cabul, had constantly at his disposal a force of 5400 horse and 3200 foot ; but the Afghan soldiers serving in Cashmere appear greatly to degenerate, becoming insolent and luxurious, yet the more western Afghans, from attachment to their native country, seldom remain long in the province.

Cashmere, being so remote from the capital of the Afghan government, and the governors delegated being intrusted with absolute authority, they are often tempt-


ed to rebel, but notwithstanding the seclusion and natural strength of the country, they (with the exception of the last) have been in general easily subdued. The native Cashmerians are unfit for soldiers, and the Afghans and Kezzelbaches soon become enervated and little disposed to resist their legitimate sovereign. The royal army on the other hand is usually composed of poor and adventurous soldiers, who look forward eagerly to the fancied pleasures of Cashmere, and know the sufferings they must endure if compelled to retreat.

The mountains around Cashmere are in many parts inhabited by tribes in a sort of dependence on the Afghan government. Their chiefs hold lands within the valley, which have probably been given them to strengthen the fervour of their loyalty, and ensure their obedience. They furnish some troops to the governor, and when he is strong enough to enforce it they pay him some revenue. On the north of this province is a chief whom the Cashmerians decorate with the title of Raja Tibet, of which however he probably only possesses a small portion. The lofty mountains between Cashmere and Lahdack have been but little explored, but caravans of merchants pass regularly between these two places, bringing shawl wool from the latter, and offering to an adventurous European well versed in the country languages, an obvious opportunity of tracing the course of the Indus further than has yet been attempted. In fact the terra incognita of this river now lies between Lahdack and Gortope, a direct distance of about 310 miles, but much more following the windings of the stream.

The natives of Cashmere are a stout well formed people, and their complexions what in France or Spain would be termed brunette. They are naturally a gay and lively people, eager in the pursuit of wealth, accounted much more acute and intriguing than the natives of Hindostan generally, and proverbially liars.

They are also much addicted to the cultivation of literature and poetry, and the common people are remarkably ingenious in cabinet work of all descriptions. The language of Cashmere is of Sanscrit origin, modified by time and the introduction of some foreign phrases. In a specimen of the Lord's prayer in this language examined by the missionaries, 25 words out of 32 were found to be radically the same with those occurring in the Bengalese and Hindostany specimens, some of them however considerably altered. Their songs are composed in Persic, which they consider more harmonious. In appearance the natives of the province have not the slightest resemblance to their Tartarian neighbours, who are an ugly race ; on the contrary the Cashmerian females have been long celebrated for their beauty and fair complexions, and on that account much sought after for wives by the Mogul nobility of Delhi, that the breed might not degenerate. Although extremely fertile and productive, the country is not thickly populated on account of the deplorable government, or rather anarchy, to which it has been so long subjected. The whole number are probably under 600,000, nor could any thing approaching this number be assigned but for the great population said to be contained in the capital (from 150,000 to 200,000). All Cashmere is reckoned holy land by the Hindoos, and abounds with miraculous fountains ; but although evidently sprung from a Hindoo stock, at present by far the greater portion of the population are Mahomedan.

Abul Fazel enumerates a succession of 150 Hindoo kings, who governed Cashmere prior to the year 742 of the Hijera, when it was celebrated for the reputed learning of its Brahmins, and the magnificence of its temples. The period of its subjugation is uncertain, but it was attacked and ravaged by Mahmood of Ghizni so early as A. D. 1012. It was afterwards



governed in a long succession by a race of Tartar princes of the Chug or Chagatay tribe, until 1586, when it was subdued by Acber, and continued subject to the Moguls of Delhi until the time of Ahmed Shah, the Cabul sovereign, and it has ever since constituted a portion of the Afghan dominions. On the first occupation of their country by this people, the natives were rebellious, but they have since been completely quelled by the strong measures prosecuted by the invaders. At present no Cashmerians, except soldiers in the service of the state, are allowed to carry arms within the city. The same prohibition does not extend to the country, where, however, in the low lands, the power of the native chiefs has been completely annihilated by the strong force of Afghans and Kezzelbachies permanently retained in the valley, and, owing to the small number of passes, the government is enabled to prevent any person either entering or quitting the country without its permission.

Owing to its remote situation, it became necessary for the Sovereign of Cabul to invest his representative in Cashmere with all the powers of a king, to be exercised without appeal or reference. The consequence was, that when the dynasty of Ahmed Shah Abdalli began to totter on their throne, the Governor of Cashmere was one of the first to claim the title as he had performed the functions of an independent prince. Accordingly in 1809, Mahommed Azim Khan, the soubahdar of the province, threw off the yoke, and set the power of his legitimate sovereign at defiance. In April, 1816, a powerful army marched from Cabul, under the command of Akram Khan, the Vizier, with the view of recovering the province for the Durranny monarchy; but owing to the treachery of the hill chief of Muzifferabad, it was defeated and compelled to retreat with infinite loss and disgrace. In November, 1816, Mahommed Azim still possessed, independent

of Cabul, the Government of Cashmere, and he has since rendered abortive an attempt to effect its conquest by Rajah Runjeet Singh, the Sikh chief of Lahore. His administration has been described as the extreme of tyranny; the inhabitants as harrassed by extortions and watched by a numerous band of spies. This oppression tends to augment the depravity of their characters and natural proneness to falsehood and cunning, but their habitual gaiety is said to prevent its affecting, in any very material degree, their happiness or inclination to sensual pleasures. It is also possible that their evil propensities have been greatly exaggerated by narrators not well qualified to report on them, or copying assertions on the subject without examination.—(*Elphinstone, Forster, Abul Fazel, Bernier, Rennell, Moorcroft, &c. &c. &c.*)

Cashmere is beyond the geographical limits of the Punjaub, but has been included in the territory by conquest since 1819. It was wrested from the Afghans, in whose hands it had remained for seventy years, by the late Rajah Runjeet Singh, and has continued an integral part of the state from that period.

CASHMERE (*or Serinagur*).—The capital of the Cashmere province, situated in lat. 33° 23' N. long. 74° 47' E. By Abul Fazel in 1582, it is described as follows: "Serinagur, the capital of Cashmere, is four fursungs in length. The last mentioned one is dry during a part of the year, and the Mar is sometimes so shallow that boats cannot pass through it. This city has for ages been in a flourishing state, and here are manufactured shawls and other fine woollen stuffs. On the east side of the city is a high hill, called the mountain of Soliman, and adjoining are two lakes, which are always full."

The modern town of Cashmere was formerly known by the name of Serinagur, but now by that of the province. It extends about three miles on each side of

the river Jhylum or Hydaspes, over which are four or five wooden bridges, and it occupies in some part of its breadth, which is unequal, about two miles. The houses, many of them two or three stories high, are slightly built of brick and mortar, with a large intermixture of timber. On the wooden roof is laid a covering of earth, which contributes to the warmth of the house during the winter, and in summer is planted with flowers. The streets are narrow and choked with the filth of the inhabitants, who are unclean to a proverb, and there are no buildings worthy of remark. The soubahdar, or governor of Cashmere, resides in a fortress called Shereghur, occupying the south-east quarter of the city. The benefits which this city enjoys in a mild salubrious air, and a river flowing through its centre, are essentially alloyed by its confined construction, and the extreme filthiness of the people. There are covered floating baths ranged along the sides of the river.

The lake of Cashmere, named in the provincial language the Dall, has long been celebrated for its beauties. It extends from the north-east quarter of the city in an oval circumference of five or six miles, and joins the Jhylum by a narrow channel near the suburbs.—The northern view of the lake is terminated at the distance of 12 miles, by a detached range of mountains, which slope from the centre to each angle; and from the base, a spacious plain, preserved in constant verdure by numerous streams, extends with an easy declivity to the surface of the water. In the centre of the plain as it approaches the lake, one of the Delhi Emperors, probably Shah Jehan, constructed a spacious garden named Shalimar. The numerous small islands in the lake have the effect of ornamenting the scenery.

Bernier, who visited this country in 1663, when travelling in the suit of the Emperor Aurengzebe,

gives a most interesting and romantic description of this city; but since the dismemberment of Cashmere from the Mogul empire by the Afghans, it has suffered many ravages and extortions. But notwithstanding these causes of decline and the vicissitude of its government, it was in 1809 estimated to contain from 150,000 to 200,000 inhabitants, and reckoned the largest and most populous city in the Affghan dominions.—(*Forster, Rennell, Abul Fazel, Bernier, Elphinstone, &c.*)

OULLER LAKE.—This lake is adjacent to the city of Cashmere, and, in 1582, was described by Abul Fazel as 28 coss in circumference, having in its centre a palace built by Sultan Zein-ul-Abdeen. Its modern dimensions are much less, but it has never undergone the accurate survey or inspection of a European.

WEHY.—This small district is described by Abul Fazel as producing much saffron, and is intersected by the Jhyllum river.

PAMPER.—A town in the province of Cashmere, situated on the north side of the Jhyllum river, 12 miles east from the city of Cashmere. Lat. $34^{\circ} 20'$ N. long. $74^{\circ} 55'$ E.

PHAK.—This district is bounded on the west by the Jhyllum, and is described by Abul Fazel as abounding with odoriferous plants. Adjoining to it is the lake of Cashmere, by him named Dall, one side of which was close to the town of Phak in 1582. On this lake were artificial islands, made for the purposes of cultivation, portions of which were frequently cut off by robbers, who absconded with them to a different part of the lake.—(*Abul Fazel, &c.*)

DUROO.—A small town in the province of Cashmere, 35 miles S. E. from the city of Cashmere. Lat. $34^{\circ} 7'$ N. long. $75^{\circ} 16'$ E.

VIRNAUGH.—A village in the province of Cashmere, 37 miles S. E. from the city of Cashmere. The

country in this neighbourhood produces apples, pears, peaches, apricots, cherries, and mulberries, besides the red and white rose, and an infinite variety of flowering shrubs. Except the mulberry, few of the fruits or vegetables of Hindostan are produced here. Near to Virnaugh a torrent of water bursts from a mountain, and soon forms a considerable stream. A bason of a square form has been constructed, it is said by the Emperor Jehangire, to receive the water where it reaches the plain.—(*Forster, &c. &c.*)

BANAUL.—A small district or valley in the province of Cashmere, situated among the southern hills. At the distance of five miles to the south-east of the village of Banaul, begins a boundary of a division of the Cashmere territory, lying beyond the great circle of mountains. The governors of Cashmere permit the fertile valley of Banaul, which is ten miles in length, to remain uncultivated, that it may not afford shelter or provisions to the bordering Hindoo states, who in former periods have, through this tract, approached the interior passes of Cashmere. The Banaul district is mountainous, and looks down on the plains of Cashmere. The village of that name is situated in lat. $33^{\circ} 56'$ N. long. $75^{\circ} 13'$ E. 40 miles S. E. from the city of Cashmere.—(*Forster, &c.*)

ISLAMABAD.—A large town in the Cashmere province, situated on the north side of the Jhyllum, 29 miles E. S. E. from the city of Cashmere. Lat. $33^{\circ} 15'$ N. long. $75^{\circ} 15'$ E. The Jhyllum here penetrates through the narrow windings of the mountains, and has a wooden bridge about 80 yards across.—(*Forster, &c.*)

BERENG.—A town in the Cashmere province, 37 miles E. from the city of Cashmere, near to which is a long defile in a mountain containing a reservoir of water seven ells square, which is considered by the Hindoos a place of great sanctity.—(*Abul Fazal, &c.*)

DUCKENPARAH (*Dakshinpara the southern portion*).—A district in the northeast quarter of Cashmere, on the mountains of which Abul Fazel, in 1582, says the snow never decreases, so that from the cold, the narrowness of the roads, and the great height of the mountains, they cannot be passed without extreme difficulty.—(*Abul Fazel, &c.*)

PANCHBERARAH.—This is described by Abul Fazel as a place of great sanctity, then dependent on Uneej, but which had formerly been a large city. The interior of Cashmere is so imperfectly known, that any geographical situation which could be assigned to this place would be merely conjectural.

CHAPTER IV.

HISTORY OF THE SIKHS AND THEIR RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS.

Account of Nanac Shah, the founder of the Sect—Composes the Adi-Granth, or first Sacred volume of the Sikhs—Introduced to the Emperor Baber—Death of Nanac—His Successors—Guru Govind makes all the Sikhs equal—Institutes the Guru Mata, or the State Council—Various predatory warfare with the Afghans, their former rulers—Forms of Government—The Acalis or Immortals established by Guru Govind—Final Settlement of the Country by Rajah Runjeet, &c. &c. &c.

NANAC SHAH, the founder of the sect, since distinguished by the name of Sikhs*, was born in the year of Christ 1469, at a small village called Talwandi†, in the district of Bhatti, in the province of Lahore. His father, whose name was Cálú†, was of the Cshatriya cast, and Védí tribe of Hindús, and had no family except Nánac, and his sister Nánaci, who married a Hindú of the name of Jayarám, that was employed as a grain-factor by Daulet Khán Lódí, a relation of the reigning emperor of Delhi. Nánac

* Sikh or Sicsha, is a Sanscrit word, which means a disciple, or devoted follower. In the Punjaubí it is corrupted into Sikh: it is a general term, and applicable to any person that follows a particular teacher.

† This village, or rather town, for such it has become, is now called Ráyapúr. It is situated on the banks of the Béyah, or Hyphasis.

‡ He is called, by some authors, Kálú Védí; but Védí is a name derived from his tribe or family.

was, agreeably to the usage of the tribe in which he was born, married to a woman of respectable family, at an early age,* by whom he had two sons, named Srichand and Lacshmí Dás. The former, who abandoned the vanities of the world, had a son called Dherm Chand, who founded the sect of Udási ; and his descendants are yet known by the name of Nánac Putráh or the children of Nánac. Lacshmí Dás addicted himself to the pleasures of this world, and left neither heirs nor reputation.

Nánac is stated, by all Sikh writers, to have been, from his childhood, inclined to devotion ; and the indifference which this feeling created towards all worldly concerns, appears to have been a source of continual uneasiness to his father ; who endeavoured, by every effort, to divert his mind from the religious turn which it had taken. With a view to effect this object, he one day gave Nánac a sum of money, to purchase salt at one village, in order to sell it at another ; in the hope of enticing him to business, by allowing him to taste the sweets of commercial profit. Nánac was pleased with the scheme, took the money, and proceeded, accompanied by a servant of the name of Bala, of the tribe of Sand'hu, towards the village where he was to make his purchase. He happened, however, on the road, to fall in with some Fakírs, (holy mendicants,) with whom he wished to commence a conversation ; but they were so weak, from want of victuals, which they had not tasted for three days, that they could only reply to the observations of Nánac by bending their heads, and other civil signs of acquiescence. Nánac, affected by their situation, said to his companion, with emotion: " My father has sent me to deal in salt, with a view to profit ; but the gain of this

* Several Sikh authors have been very precise in establishing the date of the consummation of this marriage, which they fix in the month of Asárh, of the Hindú æra of Vicramaditya, 1545.

world is unstable, and profitless ; my wish is to relieve these poor men, and to obtain that gain which is permanent and eternal." His companion* replied : " Thy resolution is good : do not delay its execution." Nánac immediately distributed his money among the hungry Fakírs ; who, after they had gained strength from the refreshment which it obtained them, entered into a long discourse with him on the unity of God, with which he was much delighted. He returned next day to his father, who demanded what profit he had made ? " I have fed the poor," said Nánac, " and have obtained that gain for you which will endure for ever." As the father happened to have little value for the species of wealth which the son had acquired, he was enraged at having his money so fruitlessly wasted, abused poor Nánac, and even struck him ; nor could the mild representations of Nánací save her brother from the violence of parental resentment. Fortune, however, according to the Sikh narrators of this anecdote of their teacher's early life, had raised him a powerful protector, who not only rescued him from punishment, but established his fame and respectability upon grounds that at once put him above all fear of future bad usage from his low-minded and sordid father. When Nánac was quite a youth, and employed to tend cattle in the fields, he happened to repose himself one day under the shade of a tree ; and, as the sun declined towards the west, its rays fell on his face, when a large black snake†, advancing to the spot where he lay, raised itself from the ground, and interposed its spread hood between Nánac and the sun's

* Bala Sand'hu, who gave this advice, continued, through Nánac's life, to be his favourite attendant and disciple.

† The veneration which the Hindús have for the snake is well known ; and this tradition, like many others, proves the attachment of the Sikh writers to that mythology, the errors of which they pretend to have wholly abandoned.

rays. Ráy Bolar*, the ruler of the district, was passing the road, near the place where Nánac slept, and marked, in silence, though not without reflection, this unequivocal sign of his future greatness. This chief overheard Cálú punishing his son for his kindness to the Fakírs. He immediately entered, and demanded the cause of the uproar; and, when informed of the circumstances, he severely chid Cálú for his conduct, and interdicted him from ever again lifting his hand to Nánac, before whom, to the astonishment of all present, he humbled himself with every mark of the most profound veneration. Though Cálú, from this event, was obliged to treat his son with more respect than formerly, he remained as solicitous as ever to detach him from his religious habits, and to fix him in some worldly occupation; and he prevailed upon Jayrám, his son-in-law, to admit him into partnership in his business. Nánac, obliged to acquiesce in these schemes, attended at the granary of Daulet Khán Lódí, which was in charge of Jayrám; but though his hands were employed in this work, and his kindness of manner made all the inhabitants of Sultánpúr, where the granary was established, his friends, yet his heart never strayed for one moment from its object. It was incessantly fixed on the Divinity; and one morning, as he sat in a contemplative posture, a holy Muhammedan Fakír approached, and exclaimed: "Oh Nánac! upon what are thy thoughts now employed? Quit such occupations, that thou mayest obtain the inheritance of eternal wealth." Nánac is said to have started up at this exclamation, and after looking for a moment in the face of the Fakír, he fell into a trance; from which he had no sooner recovered, than he immediately distributed every thing in the granary among

* Ráy, a title inferior to that of a Rájah, generally applied to the Hindú chief of a village, or small district.

the poor*: and, after this act, proceeded with loud shouts out of the gates of the city, and running into a pool of water, remained there three days; during which some writers assert he had an interview with the prophet Elias, termed by the Muhammedans, Khizzer, from whom he learnt all earthly sciences.

While Nánac remained in the pool, abstracted from all worldly considerations, holding converse with a prophet, poor Jayráw was put in prison by Daulet Khán Lódí, on the charge of having dissipated his property. Nánac, however, returned, and told Daulet Khán that Jayráw was faultless; that he was the object of punishment; and that, as such, he held himself ready to render the strictest account of all he had lost. The Khán accepted his proposal: Jayráw's accounts were settled; and, to the surprise of all, a balance was found in his favour; on which he was not only released, but reinstated in the employment and favour of his master. We are told, by the Sikh authors, that these wonderful actions increased the fame of Nánac in a very great degree; and that he began, from this period, to practise all the austerities of a holy man; and, by his frequent abstraction in the contemplation of the divine Being, and his abstinence and virtue, he soon acquired great celebrity through all the countries into which he travelled.

There are many extravagant accounts regarding the travels of Nánac. One author†, who treats of the great reform which he made in the worship of the true God, which he found degraded by the idolatry of the Hindús, and the ignorance of the Muhammedans, relates his journey to all the different Hindú places of

* This remarkable anecdote in Nánac's life is told very differently by different Sikh authors. I have followed the narrative of Bhacta Mallí. They all agree in Nánac's having, at this period, quitted the occupations of the world, and become Fakír.

† Bhai Guru Vali, author of the Gnyánan Ratnávali, a work written in the Sikh dialect of the Punjáúbí.

pilgrimage, and to Mecca, the holy temple of the Muhammedans.

It would be tedious, and foreign to the purpose of this sketch, to accompany Nánac in his travels, of which the above-mentioned author, as well as others, has given the most circumstantial accounts. He was accompanied (agreeable to them) by a celebrated musician, of the name of Merdaná, and a person named Bála Sand'hú; and it is on the tradition of the latter of these disciples, that most of the miracles* and wonders of his journies are related. In Bengal, the travellers had to encounter all kinds of sorcerers and magicians. Poor Merdaná, who had some of the propensities of Sancho, and preferred warm houses and good meals to deserts and starvation, was constantly in trouble, and more than once had his form changed into that of a sheep, and of several other animals. Nánac, however, always restored his humble friend to the human shape, and as constantly read him lectures on his imprudence. It is stated, in one of these accounts, that a Rájá of Sivanáb'hu endeavoured to tempt Nánac, by offering him all the luxuries of the world, to depart from his austere habits, but in vain. His presents of rich meats, splendid clothes, and fair ladies, only afforded the Sikh teacher so many opportunities of decrying the vanities of this world, and preaching to the Rájá the blessings of eternal life; and he at last succeeded in making him a convert, and resided at Sivanáb'hu two years and five months; during which period he composed the Prán Sancali†, for the instruction of his followers. After Nánac had visited all the cities of India, and explained to all ranks the great doctrines of the unity

* Though his biographers have ascribed miracles to Nánac, we never find that he pretended to work any: on the contrary, he derided those who did, as deriving power from evil spirits.

† It is believed that this work of Nánac has been incorporated in the first part of the Adi-Grant'h.

and omnipresence of God, he went to Mecca and Medina, where his actions, his miracles, and his long disputations with the most celebrated Muhammedan saints and doctors, are most circumstantially recorded by his biographers. He is stated, on this occasion, to have maintained his own principles, without offending those of others ; always professing himself the enemy of discord, and as having no object but to reconcile the two faiths of the Muhammedans and Hindús in one religion ; which he endeavoured to do by recalling them to that great and original tenet, in which they both believed, the unity of God, and by reclaiming them from the numerous errors into which they had fallen. During his travels, Nánac was introduced to the emperor Báber,* before whom he is said to have defended his doctrine with great firmness and eloquence. Báber was pleased with him, and ordered an ample maintenance to be bestowed upon him ; which the Sikh priest refused ; observing, that he trusted in him who provided for all men, and from whom alone a man of virtue and religion would consent to receive favour or reward. When Nánac returned from his travels, he cast off the garments of a Fakír, and wore plain clothes, but continued to give instructions to his numerous disciples ; and he appears, at this period, to have experienced the most violent opposition from the Hindú zealots, who reproached him with having laid aside the habits of a Fakír, and with the impiety of the doctrines which he taught. These accusations he treated with great contempt ; and an author, before cited, Bhai Gúrú Das Vali, states, that when he visited Vatála, he enraged the Yógiswaras† so much, that

* This interview must have taken place in 1526 or 1527 ; as it is stated to have been immediately after Daulat Khán Lódí had visited Paniput, in 1526 ; where that prince had fought, and subdued Ibrahim, emperor of Hindústan.

† Recluse penitents, who, by means of mental and corporeal mortifications, have acquired a command over the powers of nature.

they tried all their powers of enchantment to terrify him. "Some," says this writer, "assumed the shape of lions and tigers, others hissed like snakes, one fell in a shower of fire, and another tore the stars from the firmament;" but Nánac remained tranquil: and when required to exhibit some proof of his powers that would astonish them, he replied: "I have nothing to exhibit worthy of you to behold. A holy teacher has no defence but the purity of his doctrine: the world may change, but the Creator is unchangeable." These words, adds the author, caused the miracles and enchantments of the Yógíswaras to cease, and they all fell at the feet of the humble Nánac, who was protected by the all perfect God.

Nánac, according to the same authority, went from Vatála to Multán, where he communed with the Pírs, or holy fathers of the Muhammedan religion of that country. "I am come," said he, when he entered that Province "into a country full of Pírs, like the sacred Gangá, visiting the ocean." From Multán he went to Kírtipúr,* where he threw off his earthly shape, and was buried near the bank of the river Rávee, which has since overflowed his tomb. Kírtipúr continues a place of religious resort and worship; and a small piece of Nánac's garment is exhibited to pilgrims, as a sacred relic, at his Dharماسálá, or temple.

It would be difficult to give the character of Nánac† on the authority of any account we yet possess. His writings, especially the first chapters of the Adi-Grant'h, will, if ever translated, be perhaps a criterion by which he may be fairly judged; but the great emi-

* Kirtipur Dehra, on the banks of the Rávee, or Hydraotes.

† He is, throughout this sketch, called Nánac. Muhammedan historians generally term him Nánac Shah, to denote his being a Fakír, the name of Shah being frequently given to men of celebrity in that sect. The Sikhs, in speaking of him, call him Baba Nánac, or Gúru Nánac, father Nánac, or Nánac the teacher; and their writers term him Nánac Nirinkar, which means Nánac the omnipresent.

nence which he obtained, and the success with which he combated the opposition which he met, afford ample reason to conclude that he was a man of more than common genius : and this favourable impression of his character will be confirmed by a consideration of the object of his life, and the means he took to accomplish it. Born in a province on the extreme verge of India, at the very point where the religion of Muhammed and the idolatrous worship of the Hindús appeared to touch, and at a moment when both these tribes cherished the most violent rancour and animosity towards each other, his great aim was to blend those jarring elements in peaceful union, and he only endeavoured to effect this purpose through the means of mild persuasion. His wish was to recall both Muhammedans and Hindús to an exclusive attention to that sublimest of all principles, which inculcates devotion to God, and peace towards man. He had to combat the furious bigotry of the one, and the deep-rooted superstition of the other ; but he attempted to overcome all obstacles by the force of reason and humanity. And we cannot have a more convincing proof of the general character of that doctrine which he taught, and the inoffensive light in which it was viewed, than the knowledge that its success did not rouse the bigotry of the intolerant and tyrannical Muhammedan government under which he lived.

Nánac did not deem either of his sons, before mentioned, worthy of the succession to his spiritual functions, which he bequeathed to a Cshatriya of the Tréhún tribe, called Lehana, who had long been attached to him, and whom he had initiated in the sacred mysteries of his sect, clothed in the holy mantle of a Fakír, and honoured with the name of Angad,*

* This fanciful etymology represents the word Angad as a compound of the Sanscrit *Ang*, which signifies *body*, and the Persian *Khúd*, which signifies *own*. This mixture of language is quite common in the jargon of the Punjaub.

which, according to some commentators, means *own body*.

Guru Angad, for that is the name by which he is known by all Sikhs, was born at the village of Khandúr, on the bank of the Báyah, or Hyphasis, in the province of Lahore. His life does not appear to have been distinguished by any remarkable actions. He taught the same doctrine as Nánac, and wrote some chapters that now form part of the Grant'h. He left two sons, Vásu and Dátu, but neither of them was initiated; and he was succeeded, at his death*, which happened in the year A. D. 1552, and of the Samvat 1609, by Amera Dás, a Cshatriya of the tribe of B'halé, who performed the duties of a menial towards him for upwards of twelve years. It is stated, that the daily occupation of Amera Dás was to bring water from the Báyah river, a distance of six miles, to wash the feet of his master; and that one night, during a severe storm, as he was returning from his journey, his foot slipped, and he fell and broke the vessel that contained the river water, opposite the door of a weaver, who lived next house to Angad. The weaver, startled at the noise, demanded, in a loud voice, of his wife, from whence it proceeded. The woman, who was well acquainted with the daily toils and the devotion of Angad's servant, replied, "It was poor Amera Dás, who knows neither the sweets of sleep by night, nor of rest by day." This conversation was overheard by Angad; and when Amera Dás came, next morning, to perform his usual duties, he treated him with extraordinary kindness, and said: "You have endured great labour; but, henceforward, enjoy rest." Amera Dás was distinguished for his activity in preaching the tenets of Nánac, and was very successful in obtaining converts and followers; by the

* Angad died at Khandúr, a village about forty miles east of Lahore.

aid of whom he established some temporal power, built Kujarawál, and separated from the regular Sikhs the Udási sect, which was founded by Dharm-Chand, the son of Nánac, and was probably considered, at that period, as heretical.

Amera Dás had two children, a son named Móhan, and a daughter named Móhani, known by the name of B'háini; regarding whose marriage he is stated to have been very anxious: and as this event gave rise to a dynasty of leaders, who are almost adored among the Sikhs, it is recorded with much minuteness by the writers of that nation.

Amera Dás had communicated his wishes, regarding the marriage of B'háini, to a Brahmen, who was his head servant, and directed him to make some inquiries. The Brahmen did so, and reported to his master that he had been successful, and had found a youth every way suited to be the husband of his daughter. As they were speaking upon this subject in the street, Amera Dás asked what was the boy's stature? "About the same height as that lad," said the Brahmen, pointing to a youth standing near them. The attention of Amera Dás was instantly withdrawn from the Brahmen, and intently fixed upon the youth to whom he had pointed. He asked him regarding his tribe, his name, and his family. The lad said his name was Rám Dás, and that he was a Cshatriya, of a respectable family, of the Són-di tribe, and an inhabitant of the village of Góndawál. Amera Dás, pleased with the information he had received, took no more notice of the Brahmen and his choice of a son-in-law, but gave his daughter to the youth whom fortune had so casually introduced to his acquaintance.* Amera Dás died in the year A. D.

* Though a contrary belief is inculcated by Nánac, the Sikhs, like the Hindús, are inclined to be predestinarians, and this gives their minds a great tendency to view accidents as decrees of Providence; and it is probable that this instance of early good fortune in Rám Dás,

1574, and of the Samvat 1631, at the village of Góndawál, in the province of Lahore, and was succeeded by his son-in-law, Rám Dás,* whom he had initiated in the sacred mysteries of his holy profession, and who became famous for his piety, and still more from the improvements he made at Umritsir, which was for some time called Rámpúr, or Rámdáspur, after him. Some Sikh authorities ascribe the foundation of this city to him, which is not correct, as it was a very ancient town, known formerly under the name of Chak. He, however, added much to its population, and built a famous tank, or reservoir of water, which he called Umritsir, a name signifying the water of immortality, and which has become so sacred, that it has given its name, and imparted its sanctity, to the town of Rámdáspur, which has become the sacred city of the Sikh nation, and is now only known by the name of Umritsir.

After a life passed in the undisturbed propagation of his tenets, in explanation of which he wrote several works, he died, in the year A. D. 1581, and of the Samvat 1638, at Umritsir, leaving two sons, Arjunmal and Bharatmal. He was succeeded by the former†, who has rendered himself famous by compiling the Adi-Grant'h‡. The Adi-Grant'h, or first sacred

by impressing his countrymen with an idea of his being particularly favoured of Heaven, gave rise to an impression that promoted, in no slight degree, that success which it anticipated.

* No dates of the events which occurred during the rule of Rám Das are given in any of the authorities from which this sketch is drawn. One author, however, states, that he lived in the time of Akber, and was honoured with the favour of that truly tolerant and great emperor.

† Arjunmal, or Arjun, as he is more commonly called, according to B'hai Gúrá Dás B'halé, the author of the Gnyán Ratnávali, was not initiated in the sacred mysteries of his father. This author says, that Arjun, though a secular man, did not suffer the office of Gúrá, or priest to leave the Sónði tribe. "Like a substance," he adds, "which none else could digest, the property of the family remained in the family."

‡ Grant'h means book; but, as a mark of its superiority to all others, is given to this work, as "The Book." Adi-Grant'h means,

volume of the Sikhs, contains ninety-two sections : it was partly composed by Nánac and his immediate successors, but received its present form and arrangement from Arjunmal,* who has blended his own additions with what he deemed most valuable in the compositions of his predecessors. It is Arjun, then, who ought, from this act, to be deemed the first who gave consistent form and order to the religion of the Sikhs : an act which, though it has produced the effect he wished, of uniting that nation more closely, and of increasing their numbers, proved fatal to himself. The jealousy of the Muhammedan government was excited, and he was made its sacrifice. The mode of his death, which happened in the year of Christ 1606, and of the Samvat 1663, is related very differently by different authorities : but several of the most respectable agree in stating, that his martyrdom, for such they term it, was caused by the active hatred of a rival Hindú zealot, Daníchand Cshatríya, whose writings he refused to admit into the Adi-Grant'h, on the ground that the tenets inculcated in them were irreconcilable to the pure doctrine of the unity and omnipotence of God, taught in that sacred volume. This rival had sufficient influence with the Muhammedan governor of the province to procure the imprisonment of Arjun ; who is affirmed, by some writers, to have died from the severity of his confinement ; and, by others, to have been put to death in the most cruel manner. In

the first Grant'h, or book, and is generally applied to this work to distinguish it from the Dasama Padshah ka Grant'h, or the book of the tenth king, composed by Gúru Góvind.

* Though the original Adi-Grant'h was compiled by Arjunmal, from the writings of Nánac, Angad, Amara Dás, and Rám Dás, and enlarged and improved by his own additions and commentaries, some small portions have been subsequently added by thirteen different persons, whose numbers, however, are reduced, by the Sikh authors, to twelve and a half : the last contributor to this sacred volume being a woman, is only admitted to rank in the list as a fraction, by these ungallant writers.

whatever way his life was terminated, there can be no doubt, from its consequences, that it was considered, by his followers, as an atrocious murder, committed by the Muhammedan government; and the Sikhs, who had been, till then, an inoffensive, peaceable sect, took arms under Har Góvind, the son of Arjunmal, and wreaked their vengeance upon all whom they thought concerned in the death of their revered priest.

The contest carried on by Har Góvind against the Muhammedan chiefs in the Punjaub, though no doubt marked by that animosity which springs from a deep and implacable sense of injury on one part, and the insolence and violence of insulted power on the other, could not have been of great magnitude or importance, else it would have been more noticed by contemporary Muhammedan writers; but it was the first fruits of that desperate spirit of hostility, which was soon after to distinguish the wars between the followers of Ná-nac and those of Muhammed: and, from every account of Har Góvind's life, it appears to have been his anxious wish to inspire his followers with the most irreconcilable hatred of their oppressors.

It is stated, that this warlike* Gúró, or priest mili-

* Several historical accounts of the Sikhs, particularly that published by Major Browne, which is, in general, drawn from authentic sources, appear to be in error with regard to the period at which this race first took arms, which the last author states to have occurred under Gúró Góvind; but several Sikh authors, of great respectability and information, agree in ascribing to the efforts of Har Góvind, the son of Arjun, this great change in the Sikh commonwealth; and their correctness in this point, appears to be placed beyond all question, by a passage in the Ratnávalí of B'hai Gúró Dás B'halé; who observes, "That five phials (of divine grace) were distributed to five Pírs (holy men), but the sixth Pír was a mighty Gúró (priest). Arjun threw off his earthly frame, and the form of Har Góvind mounted the seat of authority. The Sóndí race continued exhibiting their different forms in their turns. Har Góvind was the destroyer of armies, a martial Gúró (priest), a great warrior, and performed great actions." The mistake of some European writers on this subject probably originated in a confusion of verbal accounts; and the similarity of the name of Har Góvind, the son of Arjunmal, and Góvind, the last and greatest

tant, wore two swords in his girdle. Being asked why he did so: "The one," said he, "is to revenge the death of my father; the other, to destroy the miracles of Muhammed."

Har Góvind is reputed, by some authors, to have been the first who allowed his followers to eat* the flesh of all animals, with the exception of the cow: and it appears not improbable that he made this great change in their diet at the time when he effected a still more remarkable revolution in their habits, by converting a race of peaceable enthusiasts into an intrepid band of soldiers.† He had five sons, Bábú Gúrúdaitya, Saurat Singh, Tégh Bahádur, Anna Ray, and Atal Ray. The two last died without descendants. Saurat Singh and Tégh Singh, or Tégh Bahádur, were, by the cruel persecution of the Muhammedans, forced to fly into the mountains to the northward of the Punjab. His eldest son, Gurudaitya, died early, but left two sons, Dáharmal and Har Ráy; the latter of whom succeeded his grandfather, who died in the year A. D. 1644, and of the Samvat 1701. It does not appear that Har Ráy enjoyed much temporal power, or that he entered into any hostilities with the Muhammedans: his rule was tranquil, and passed without any remarkable event; owing, probably, to the vigor which the Muhammedan power had attained in the early part of the reign of Aurungzeb. At his death, which happened in the year A. D. 1661, and of the Samvat

of the Sikh Gúrús, the son of Tégh Bahádur. In the Persian sketch, which Major Browne translates, the name of Har Góvind is not mentioned. The son of Arjunmal is called Gúrú Rám Ráy, which is obviously a mistake of the author of that manuscript.

* Nánac had forbidden hog's flesh, though a common species of food among the lower tribe of Hindús, in compliance with the prejudices of the Muhammedans, whom it was his great wish to reconcile to his faith by every concession and persuasion.

† It is stated, by a Sikh author named Nand, that Har Góvind, during his ministry, established the practice of invoking the three great Hindú deities, Brahmá, Vishnu, and Siva: but this is not confirmed by any other authority which I have seen.

1718, a violent contest arose among the Sikhs, regarding the succession to the office of spiritual leader ; for the temporal power of their ruler was, at this period, little more than nominal. The dispute between his sons, or, as some Sikh authors state, his son and grandson, Har Crishn and Rám Ráy, was referred to Dehli, whither both parties went ; and, by an imperial decree of Aurungzeb, the Sikhs were allowed to elect their own priest. They chose Har Crishn, who died at Dehli in the year A. D. 1664, and of the Samvat 1721 ; and was succeeded by his uncle, Tégh Behádur. He, however, had to encounter the most violent opposition from his nephew, Rám Ráy,* who remained at Dehli, and endeavoured, by every art and intrigue, to effect his ruin : he was seized, and brought to Dehli, in consequence of his nephew's misrepresentations ; and, after being in prison for two years, was released at the intercession of Jayasingh, Rájá of Jayapúr, whom he accompanied to Bengal. Tégh Behádur afterwards took up his abode at the city of Patna† ; but was pursued, agreeable to Sikh authors, to his retreat, with implacable rancour, by the jealousy and ambition of Rám Ráy ; who at last accomplished the destruction of his rival. He was brought from Patna, and, by the accounts of the same authors, publicly put to death, without even the allegation of a crime, beyond a firm and undaunted assertion of the truth of that faith of

* The violent contests of the Sikhs are mentioned by most of their writers; and though they disagree in their accounts, they all represent Tégh Behádur as falling the innocent sacrifice of Muhammedan despotism and intolerance; which, from the evidence of all respectable contemporary Muhammedan authors, would appear not to be the fact. Tégh Behádur, agreeable to them, provoked his execution by a series of crimes. He joined, they state, with a Moslem Fakír, of the name of Hafiz ed Dín; and, supported by a body of armed mendicants, committed the most violent depredations on the peaceable inhabitants of the Punjaub. The author of the *Seir Mutákhherin* says he was, in consequence of these excesses, put to death at Gwalior, and his body cut into four quarters, one of which was hung up at each gate of the fortress.

† A Sikh college was founded in that city.

which he was the high priest. This event is said to have taken place in the year A. D. 1675, and of the Samvat 1732: but the Sikh records of their own history, from the death of Har Góvind to that of Tégh Behádur, are contradictory and unsatisfactory, and appear to merit little attention. The fact is, that the sect was almost crushed, in consequence of their first effort to attain power, under Har Góvind: and, from the period of his death to that of Tégh Behádur, the Mogul empire was, as has been before stated, in the zenith of its power, under Aurungzeb: and the Sikhs, who had never attained any real strength, were rendered still weaker by their own internal dissensions. Their writers have endeavoured to supply this chasm in their history by a fabulous account of the numerous miracles which were wrought by their priests, Rám Ráy, Har Crishn, and even the unfortunate Tégh Behádur, at Dehli, all of whom are said to have astonished the emperor and his nobles, by a display of their supernatural powers: but their wide difference from each other, in these relations, would prove, if any proof was wanting, that all the annals of that period are fabricated.

The history of the Sikhs, after the death of Tégh Behádur, assumes a new aspect. It is no longer the record of a sect, who, revering the conciliatory and mild tenets of their founder, desired more to protect themselves than to injure others; but that of a nation, who, adding to a deep sense of the injuries they had sustained from a bigotted and overbearing government, all the ardour of men commencing a military career of glory, listened, with rapture, to a son glowing with vengeance against the murderers of his father, who taught a doctrine suited to the troubled state of his mind, and called upon his followers, by every feeling of manhood, to lay aside their peaceable habits, to graft the resolute courage of the soldier on the enthusiastic faith of the devotee, to swear eternal war

with the cruel and haughty Muhammedans, and to devote themselves to *steel*, as the only means of obtaining every blessing that this world, or that to come, could afford to mortals.

This was the doctrine of Gúrú Góvind, the son of Tégh Behádur; who, though very young at his father's death, had his mind imbued with the deepest horror at that event, and cherished a spirit of implacable resentment against those whom he considered as his murderers. Devoting his life to this object, we find him, when quite a youth, at the head of a large party of his followers, amid the hills of Srínagar, where he gave proofs of that ardent and daring mind, which afterwards raised him to such eminence. He was not, however, able to maintain himself against the prince of that country, with whom he had entered into hostilities; and, being obliged to leave it, he went to the Punjáub, where he was warmly welcomed by a Hindú chief in rebellion against the government. This chief gave Góvind possession of Mákhál,* and several other villages, where he settled with his followers, and repaid his benefactor by aiding him in his depredations. Góvind appears, at this moment, to have been universally acknowledged by the Sikhs, as their Satgúrú, or chief spiritual leader; and he used the influence which that station, his sufferings, and the popularity of his cause, gave him, to effect a complete change in the habits and religion of his countrymen.† It would be tedious and useless to follow the Sikh writer through those volumes of fables in which they have narrated the wonders that prognosticated the rise of this, the most revered of all their priests, to power; or to enter, at any length, into those accounts which

* A town on the Sutlég.

† Gúrú Góvind is stated, by a Sikh auther of respectability, B'hai Gúrú Dás B'halé, to have been fourteen years of age when his father was put to death.

they, and Góvind himself, for he is equally celebrated as an author and as a warrior, have given of his exploits. It will be sufficient, for the purpose of this sketch, to state the essential changes which he effected in his tribe, and the consequences of his innovations.

Though the Sikhs had already, under Har Góvind, been initiated in arms, yet they appear to have used these only in self-defence : and as every tribe of Hindús, from the Brahmen to the lowest of the Sùdra, may, in cases of necessity, use them without any infringement of the original institutions of their tribe, no violation of these institutions was caused by the rules of Nánac ; which, framed with a view to conciliation, carefully abstained from all interference with the civil institutes of the Hindús. But his more daring successor, Gúrú Góvind, saw that such observances were at variance with the plans of his lofty ambition ; and he wisely judged, that the only means by which he could ever hope to oppose the Muhammedan government with success, were not only to admit converts from all tribes, but to break, at once, those rules by which the Hindús had been so long chained ; to arm, in short, the whole population of the country, and to make worldly wealth and rank an object to which Hindús, of every class, might aspire.

The extent to which Góvind succeeded in this design will be more fully noticed in another place. It is here only necessary to state the leading features of those changes by which he subverted, in so short a time, the hoary institutions of Brahmá,* and excited terror and

* The object of Nanác was to abolish the distinctions of caste amongst the Hindús, and to bring them to the adoration of that Supreme Being, before whom all men, he contended, were equal. Gúrú Góvind, who adopted all the principles of his celebrated predecessor, as far as religious usages were concerned, is reported to have said, on this subject, that the four tribes of Hindús, the Brahmen, Cshatriya, Vaisya, and Sùdra, would, like *pán* (beetle-leaf), *chunám* (lime), *supári* (beetle-nut), and *khat* (*terra japonica*, or *catechu*), become all of one colour, when well chewed.

astonishment in the minds of the Muhammedan conquerors of India, who saw the religious prejudices of the Hindús, which they had calculated upon as one of the pillars of their safety, because they limited the great majority of the population to peaceable occupations, fall before the touch of a bold and enthusiastic innovator, who opened at once, to men of the lowest tribe,* the dazzling prospect of earthly glory. All who subscribed to his tenets were upon a level, and the Brahmen who entered his sect had no higher claims to eminence than the lowest Súdra who swept his house. It was the object of Góvind to make all Sikhs equal,† and that their advancement should solely depend upon their exertions: and well aware how necessary it was to inspire men of a low race, and of groveling minds, with pride in themselves, he changed the name of his followers from Sikh to Singh, or lion; thus giving to all his followers that honourable title which had been before exclusively assumed by the Rajapúts, the first military class of Hindús: and every Sikh felt himself at once elevated to rank with the highest, by this proud appellation.

The disciples of Góvind were required to devote themselves to arms, always to have *steel* about them in some shape or other; to wear a blue dress; to allow their hair to grow; to exclaim, when they met each other, *Wá! Gúrují ká khálsah! Wá! Gúrují ki*

* Some men of the lowest Hindú tribe, of the occupation of sweepers, were employed to bring away the corpse of Tégh Béhádur from Dehli. Their success was rewarded by high rank and employment. Several of the same tribe, who have become Sikhs, have been remarkable for their valour, and have attained great reputation. They are distinguished, among the Sikhs, by the name of Ran-Rata Singh.

† That is, equal in civil rights. He wished to remove the disqualifications of birth, and do away caste. That he did not completely effect this object, and that some distinctions of their former tribes, particularly those relating to intermarriage, should still be kept up by the Sikhs, cannot be a matter of astonishment to those acquainted with the deep-rooted prejudices of the Hindús upon this point; which is as much a feeling of family pride as of religious usage.

futteh! which means, "Success to the state of the Gúrú! Victory attend the Gúrú!"* The intention of some of these institutions is obvious; such as that principle of devotion to *steel*, by which all were made soldiers; and that exclamation, which made the success of their priest, and that of the commonwealth, the object of their hourly prayer. It became, in fact, the watchword which was continually to revive, in the minds of the Sikh disciple, the obligations he owed to that community of which he had become a member, and to that faith which he had adopted.

Of the causes which led Góvind to enjoin his followers to regard it as impious to cut the hair of their heads, or shave their beards, very different accounts are given. Several Muhammedan authors state, that both this ordination, and the one which directed his followers to wear blue clothes, was given in consequence of his gratitude to some Afghán mountaineers, who aided his escape from a fort, in which he was besieged, by clothing him in a chequered blue dress, and causing him to allow his hair to grow, in order to pass him for one of their own Pírs, or holy fathers, in which they succeeded. This account, however, is not supported by any Sikh writer; and one of the most respectable and best informed authors of that sect states, that when Gúrú Góvind first went to Anandpúr Mák'haval, which was also called Késgher, or the house of hair, he spent much of his time in devotion, at a temple of Durga Bhavaní, the goddess of courage, by whom he was directed to unloose his hair and draw his sword. Góvind, in consequence of this pretended divine order, vowed he would preserve his hair, as consecrated to that divinity, and directed his followers to do the same.† The origin of that blue

* Spiritual leader.

† The goddess Durgá Bhavaní is said, by a Sikh author, to be represented, in some images, with her hair long and dishevelled.

chequered* dress, which was at one time worn by all Góvind's followers, and is still worn by the Acálís, or *never-dying*, (the most remarkable class of devotees of that sect,) is differently stated by different authors : but it appears probable, that both these institutions proceeded from the policy of Góvind, who sought to separate his followers from all other classes of India, as much by their appearance as by their religion : and he judged with wisdom when he gave consequence to such distinctions ; which, though first established as mere forms, soon supersede the substance of belief ; and, when strengthened by usage, become the points to which ignorant and unenlightened minds have, in all ages of the world, shown the most resolute and unconquerable adherence.

Gúrú Góvind inculcated his tenets upon his followers by his preaching, his actions, and his works ; among which is the Dasamá Pádsháh ka Grant'h, or the book of the tenth king or ruler ; Gúrú Góvind being the tenth leader of the sect from Nánac. This volume, which is not limited to religious subjects, but filled with accounts of his own battles, and written with the view of stirring up a spirit of valour and emulation among his followers, is at least as much revered, among the Sikhs, as the Adi-Grant'h of Arjunmal. Góvind is said to have first instituted the Gúrú Mata, or state council, among the Sikhs ; which meets at Umritsir. The constitution and usages of this national assembly will be described hereafter : it is here only necessary to observe, that its institution adds one more proof to those already stated, of the comprehensive and able mind of this bold reformer, who gave, by its foundation, that form of a federative republic, to the commonwealth of the

* This institution is also said to be borrowed from the Hindú mythology. Bala Rám, the elder brother of Crishna, wore blue clothes ; from which he is called Nilámbar, or *the clothed in dark blue* ; and Shitivas, or *the blue clothed*.

Sikhs, which was most calculated to rouse his followers from their indolent habits, and deep-rooted prejudices, by giving them a personal share in the government, and placing within the reach of every individual the attainment of rank and influence in the state.

It could not be expected that Gúru Góvind could accomplish all those great schemes he had planned. He planted the tree; but it was not permitted, according to Sikh writers, that he should see it in that maturity which it was destined to reach: and this, these authors state, was foretold to him by some Brahmens, skilled in necromancy. It would be tedious to dwell on such fables;* and it is time to return to the political life of Góvind, which is marked by but few events of importance. These are either related by Muhammedan authors, who detract from all the pretensions of this enemy of their faith and name: by his disciples, who exalt the slightest of his actions into the achievements of a divinity: or by himself, for he wrote an account of his own wars. This last work, however, is more calculated to inflame the courage of his followers than to convey correct information of actual events.

Gúru Góvind Singh, in the Vichitra Nátaç, a work

* One of the most popular of these fables states, that in the year of the Híjerah 1118, Gúru Góvind, agreeably to the directions he had received from two Brahmen necromancers, threw a number of magical compounds, given him by these Brahmens, into a fire, near which he continued in prayers for several days. A sword of lightning at last burst from the flame of fire; but Góvind, instead of seizing this sword in an undaunted manner, as he was instructed, was dazzled by its splendour, and shrunk from it in alarm. The sword instantly flew to heaven; from whence a loud voice was heard to say, "Gúru Govind! thy wishes shall be fulfilled by thy posterity, and thy followers shall daily increase." The Brahmens were in despair at this failure; but, after deep reflection, they told Góvind, there was still one mode of acquiring that honour for himself, which appeared, by the decree that had been pronounced, doomed for his posterity. If he would only allow them to take off his head, and throw it into the fire, he would be resuscitated to the enjoyment of the greatest glory. The Gúru excused himself from trying this experiment, declaring that he was content that his descendants should enjoy the fruits of that tree which he had planted.

written by himself, and inserted in the Dasama Pádsháh ka Grant'h, traces the descent of the Cshatriya tribe of Sóndí, to which he belongs, from a race of Hindú Rájás,* who founded the cities of Casúr and Lahore. He was born, he states, at Patan, or Patna, and brought up at Madra Dés, in the Punjáub. He went, after his father's death, to the banks of the Cálindí, or Yamuná, and addicted himself to hunting the wild beasts of the forest, and other manly diversions: but this occupation, he adds, offended the emperor of Dehli, who ordered chiefs, of the Muhammedan race, to attack him. Gúrú Góvind describes, in this work, with great animation, his own feats, and those of his friends,† in

* These Rájás appear, from the same authority, to be descended in a direct line from Hindú gods.

† The following short extract from the translation of the Vichitra Nátaç, will show that Góvind gave his friends their full meed of praise, and will also exhibit the character of his style: "Cripál rages: wielding his mace, he crushed the skull of the fierce Hyát Khan. He made the blood spurt aloft, and scattered the brains of the chief, as Crishna crushed the earthen vessel of butter. Then Nand Chand raged in dreadful ire, launching the spear, and wielding the sword. He broke his keen scimitar, and drew his dagger, to support the honour of the Sóndí race. Then my maternal uncle, Cripál, advanced in his rage and exhibited the skilful war-feats of a true Cshatriya. The mighty warrior, though struck by an arrow, with another made a valiant Khán fall from his saddle, and Sáheb Chand, of the Cshatriya race, strove in the battle's fury, and slew a blood-thirsty Khán, a warrior of Khorásan." After recording the actions of many others, Góvind thus describes his own deeds: "The blood-drinking spectres and ghosts yelled for carnage; the fierce Vetála, the chief of the spectres, laughed for joy, and sternly prepared for his repast. The vultures hovered around, screaming for their prey. Hari Chand, (a Hindú chief in the emperor's army,) in his wrath, drawing his bow, first struck my steed with an arrow: aiming a second time, he discharged his arrow; but the Deity preserved me, and it passed me, and only grazed my ear. His third arrow struck my breast: it tore open the mail, and pierced the skin, leaving a slight scar; but the God whom I adore saved me. When I felt this hurt, my anger was kindled; I drew my bow and discharged an arrow: all my champions did the same, rushing onwards to the battle. Then I aimed at the young hero, and struck him. Hari Chand perished, and many of his host; death devoured him, who was called a Rájá among a hundred thousand Rájás. Then all the host, struck with consternation, fled, deserting the field of combat. I obtained the victory through the favour of the Most High; and, victorious in the field, we raised aloud the song of triumph. Riches fell on us like rain, and all our warriors were glad."

the first of his actions: in which, by his account, the arrows of the Sikhs were victorious over the sabres of the Muhammedans.*

The first success appears to have greatly increased the number of Gúru Góvind's followers, whom he established at Anandpúr, Khílór, and the towns in their vicinity; where they remained, till called to aid the Rájá of Nadón,† Bhíma Chand, who was threatened with an invasion by the Rájá of Jammu; who had been excited to hostilities by Mía Khan, a Mogul chief, then at war with Bhíma Chand.

Gúru Góvind gives an account of this war, which consisted of attacking and defending the narrow passes of the mountains. He describes Bhíma Chand and himself as leading on their warriors, who advanced, he says, to battle, "like a stream of flame consuming the forest." They were completely successful in this expedition; the Rájá of Jammu, and his Muhammedan allies, having been defeated, and chased with disgrace across the Sutlégj.

Gúru Góvind next relates the advance of the son of Diláwer Khán against him. The object of the Muhammedan chief appears to have been, to surprise Góvind and his followers at night: but, when that project was defeated, his troops were seized with a panic, and fled from the Sikhs without a contest. The father, enraged at the disgraceful retreat of his son, collected all his followers, and sent Husain Khán, who

* Hyát Khan and Nejábet Khán are mentioned as two of the principal chiefs of the emperor's army that fell in this first action. Góvind, speaking of the fall of the latter, says: "When Nejábet Khán fell the world exclaimed, alas! but the region of Swarga (the heavens) shouted victory."

† A mountainous tract of country, that borders on the Punjáub, It lies to the N. W. of Srínagar, and the S. E. of Jammu. The present Rájá, Sansár Chand, is a chief of great respectability. His country has lately been overrun by the Rájá of Nepál and Goork'ha. I derived considerable information regarding this family, and their territories, from the envoy of Sansár Chand, who attended Lord Lake, in 1805, when the British army was in the Punjáub.

made successful inroads upon the Sikhs, taking several of their principal forts.* A general action at last took place, in which the Khán, after performing prodigies of valour, was defeated, and lost his life. Gúrú Góvind was not present at this battle. "The lord of the earth," he says, "detained me from this conflict, and caused the rain of steel to descend in another quarter."

Diláwer Khán and Rustam Khán next marched against the Sikhs, who appear to have been disheartened at the loss of some of their principal chiefs, and more at the accounts they received of Aurungzeb's rage at their progress, and of his having detached his son to the district of Madra,† in order to take measures to quell them. At the prince's approach, "every body," says Gúrú Góvind, "was struck with terror. Unable to comprehend the ways of the Eternal, several deserted me, and fled, and took refuge in the lofty mountains. These vile cowards were," he adds, "too greatly alarmed in mind to understand their own advantage; for the emperor sent troops, who burnt the habitations of those that had fled." He takes this occasion of denouncing every misery that this world can bring, and all the pains and horrors of the next, on those who desert their Gúrú, or priest. "The man

* Though the account of this war is given in a style sufficiently inflated for the wars of the demons and angels; yet, as Góvind relates, that Hussain Khán returned a messenger, which one of the principal Rájás had sent him, with this message to his master; "Pay down ten thousand rupees, or destruction descends on thy head;" we may judge, both from the demand, and the amount of the contribution, of the nature of this contest, as well as its scale. It was evidently one of those petty provincial wars, which took place in every remote part of the Indian empire, when it was distracted: and, at this period, Aurungzeb was wholly engaged in the Dek'hin, and the northern provinces were consequently neglected, and their governments in a weak and unsettled state.

† This must have been in the year 1701, when Baháder Shah was detached from the Dek'hin to take charge of the government of Cábul, and was probably ordered, at the same time, to settle the disturbances in the Punjáub.

who does this," he writes, "shall neither have child nor offspring. His aged parents shall die in grief and sorrow, and he shall perish like a dog, and be thrown into hell to lament." After many more curses on apostates, he concludes this anathema by stating, that the good genius of prosperity in this world, and eternal blessings in the next, shall be the certain reward of all who remain attached to their Gúrú: and, as an instance, he affirms, that not one of those faithful followers, who had adhered to him at this trying crisis, had received the least injury.*

Gúrú Góvind closes his first work, the Vichitra Nátaç, with a further representation on the shame that attends apostasy, and the rewards that await those that prove true to their religion; and he concludes by a prayer to the Deity, and a declaration of his intention to compose, for the use of his disciples, a still larger work; by which the Sikhs conceive that he meant the rest of the Dasama Pádsháh ka Grant'h, of which the Vichitra Nátaç forms the first section.

An account of Góvind's war with the Rájá of Kahilúr,† is found in a work written in the Dúgar, or mountain dialect of the Punjáubi tongue, which gives an account of some other actions of this chief. Though this account is greatly exaggerated, it no doubt states some facts correctly, and therefore merits a brief notice. According to this authority, the Rájás of Kahilúr, Jiswál, and others, being defeated and disgraced in several actions, applied to the court of Au-

* There is a remarkable passage in this chapter, in which Gúrú Góvind appears to acknowledge the supremacy of the emperor. "God," he says, "formed both Baba (Nánac) and Báber (the emperor of that name). Look upon Baba as the Padshah (king) of religion, and Báber, the lord of the world. He who will not give Nánac a single damri, (a coin the sixteenth part of an anna,) will receive a severe punishment from Báber."

† Kahilúr, or Kahlóre, is situated on the Sutláj above Mák'havál. It is near the mountains through which that river flows into the Punjáub. Another place of the name of Kahlúr, or Kahlóre, is situated a short distance from Lahore, to the N. E. of that city.

rungzéb for aid against Gúrú Góvind, from whom they stated that they had received great injuries. When the emperor asked who made the complaint, the answer was : " It is the chief of Kahilur, thy servant, who has been despoiled of his country by violence, though a faithful Zemindar (landholder), and one who has always been punctual in paying his contributions." Such were the representations, this author states, by which they obtained the aid of an army from the emperor.

Their combined forces proceeded against Gúrú Góvind and his followers, who were obliged to shut themselves up in their fortresses, where they endured every misery that sickness and famine can bring upon a besieged place. Góvind, after suffering the greatest hardships, determined to attempt his escape. He ordered his followers to leave the fort, one by one, at midnight, and to separate the moment they went out. The misery of this separation, which divided the father from the child, the husband from the wife, and brothers from sisters, was horrible ; but it was the only chance which they had of safety, and his orders were obeyed. He himself went, among the rest ; and, after undergoing great fatigue, and escaping many dangers, he arrived at Chamkóur, by the Rájá of which place he was received in a kind and friendly manner. His enemies had entered the fortress which Góvind left, the moment he fled, and made many prisoners ; among which were his mother and his two children, who were carried to Foujdar Khán, the governor of Sirhind, by whose orders they were inhumanly massacred.* The army of the emperor, aided by the Rájás hostile to Góvind, next marched to Chamkóur, and encompassed it on all sides. Góvind, in despair, clasping his hands, called upon the goddess of the sword.† " The world sees," he exclaimed, " that we

* The Muhammedan authors blame Vízír Khán for this unnecessary and impolitic act of barbarity.

† Bhavání Durgá.

have no help but thee !” saying which, he prepared, with his few followers, to make the most desperate resistance.

The emperor’s army, employed at this period against Góvind, was commanded by Khwájeh Muhammed and Nahar Khán, who deputed, at the commencement of the siege, an envoy to the Sikh leader, with the following message : “ This army is not one belonging to Rájás and Ránás : it is that of the great Aurungzeb : show, therefore, thy respect, and embrace the true faith.” The envoy proceeded, in the execution of his mission, with all the pride of those he represented. “ Listen,” said he, from himself to Gúrú Góvind, “ to the words of the Nawáb : leave off contending with us, and playing the infidel ; for it is evident you never can reap advantage from such an unequal war.” He was stopped by Ajit Singh, the son of Góvind, from saying more. That youth, seizing his scimeter, exclaimed : “ If you utter another word, I will humble your pride : I will smite your head from your body, and cut you to pieces, for daring to speak such language before our chiefs.” The blood of the envoy boiled with rage, and he returned with this answer to his master.

This effort to subdue the fortitude and faith of Góvind having failed, the siege commenced with great vigour. A long description is given by B’hai Gúrú Dás B’halé and other Sikh authors, of the actions that were performed. Amongst the most distinguished, were those of the brave, but unfortunate, Ajit Singh,* the son of

* In the Punjaub narrative of B’hai Gúrú Dás B’halé, the actions of Ajit Singh, and Ranjit Singh, sons of Góvind, are particularly described ; and, from one part of the description, it would appear that the family of Góvind, proud of their descent, had not laid aside the *zundr*, or holy cord, to which they were, as belonging to the Cshatriya race, entitled. Speaking of these youths, the author says : “ Slaughtering every Turk and Pahlán whom they saw, they adorned their sacred strings, by converting them into sword-belts. Returning from the field, they sought their father, who bestowed a hundred blessings on their scimeters.”

Gúrú Góvind, whose death is thus recorded: "A second time the Khán advanced, and the battle raged. Some fought, some fled. Ajit Singh, covered with glory, departed to Swarga (heaven). Indra,* first of the gods (Dévatás), advanced with the celestial host to meet him; he conducted him to Dévapúr, the city of the gods, and seated him on a celestial throne: having remained there a short time, he proceeded to the region of the sun. Thus," he concludes, "Ajit Singh departed in glory; and his fame extends over three worlds, for the fame of the warrior lives for ever."

Though Góvind showed an invincible spirit, and performed prodigies of valour, having killed, with his own hand, Nahar Khán, and wounded Khwájeh Muhammed, the other leader of the emperor's troops, it was impossible to contend longer against such superior numbers; and he at last, taking advantage of a dark night, fled from Chamkóur, covering his face, according to the Sikh author, from shame at his own disgrace.

This sketch of the life of Góvind is compiled from his own works, and those of other Sikh writers, such as Nand and B'hai Gúrú Dás; and the events recorded, allowing for the colouring with which such narratives are written in the East, appear to be correct: the leading facts are almost all established by the evidence of contemporary Muhammedan writers, to whom we must trust for the remainder of his history; as the authorities we have followed end at the period of his flight from Chamkóur.

Most accounts agree that Gúrú Góvind, after his flight, was, from a sense of his misfortunes, and the loss of his children, bereft of his reason, and wandered

* The Sikh author, though he may reject the superstitious idolatry of the Hindús, adorns his descriptions with every image its mythology can furnish; and claims for his hero the same high honours in Swarga, that a Brahmen would expect for one of the Pándu race.

X about for a considerable time in the most deplorable condition. One account states, that he died in the Punjáúb; another, that he went to Patna, where he ended his days; a third, taken from a Sikh authority,* asserts that Gúrá Góvind, after remaining some time in the Lak'hi-Jungle, to which he had fled, returned without molestation to his former residence in the Punjáúb; and that, so far from meeting with any persecution from the Muhammedan government, he received favours from the emperor, Baháder Sháh; who, aware of his military talents, gave him a small military command in the Dek'hin, where he was stabbed by a Patán soldier's son, and expired of his wounds, in the year 1708, at Nadér, a town situate on the Godaveri river, about one hundred miles from Haiderabad.

It is sufficiently established, from these contradictory and imperfect accounts of the latter years of Gúrá Góvind, that he performed no actions worthy of record after his flight from Chamkóur: and when we consider the enthusiastic ardour of his mind, his active habits, his valour, and the insatiable thirst of revenge, which he had cherished through life, against the murderers of his father, and the oppressors of his sect, we cannot think, when that leading passion of his mind must have been increased by the massacre of his children and the death or mutilation† of his most attached followers, that he would have remained inactive; much less that he would have sunk into a servant of that government, against which he had been in constant

* Mr. Foster has followed this authority in his account of the Sikh nation: and I am inclined to believe that the part of it which relates to Gúrá Góvind's dying at Nadér, in the Dek'hin, of a wound received from a Patán, is correct; as it is written on the last page of a copy of the *Adi-Grant'h*, in my possession, with several other facts relative to the dates of the births and deaths of the principal high priests of the Sikhs.

† Both at Chamkóur, and other forts, from which the famished Sikhs attempted to escape, many of them were taken, and had their noses and ears cut off.

rebellion: nor is it likely that such a leader as Gúrú Góvind could ever have been trusted by a Muhammedan prince: and there appears, therefore, every reason to give credit to those accounts which state, that mental distraction, in consequence of deep distress and disappointment, was the cause of the inactivity of Gúrú Góvind's declining years. Nor is such a conclusion at all at variance with the fact of his being killed at Nadér, as it is probable, even if he was reduced to the state described, that he continued, till the close of his existence, that wandering and adventurous life to which he had been so early accustomed.

In the character of this reformer of the Sikhs, it is impossible not to recognise many of those features which have distinguished the most celebrated founders of political communities. The object he attempted was great and laudable. It was the emancipation of his tribe from oppression and persecution; and the means which he adopted, were such as a comprehensive mind could alone have suggested. The Muhammedan conquerors of India, as they added to their territories, added to their strength, by making proselytes through the double means of persuasion and force; and these, the moment they had adopted their faith, became the supporters of their power against the efforts of the Hindús; who, bound in the chains of their civil and religious institutions, could neither add to their number by admitting converts, nor allow more than a small proportion of the population of the country to arm against the enemy. Góvind saw that he could only hope for success by a bold departure from usages which were calculated to keep those, by whom they were observed, in a degraded subjection to an insulting and intolerant race. "You make Hindús Muhammedans, and are justified by your laws," he is said to have written to Aurungzeb: "now I, on a principle of self-preservation, which is superior to all laws, will make Muham-

medans Hindús.* You may rest," he added, "in fancied security: but beware! for I will teach the sparrow to strike the eagle to the ground." A fine allusion to his design of inspiring the lowest races among the Hindús with that valour and ambition which would lead them to perform the greatest actions.

The manner in which Góvind endeavoured to accomplish the great plan he had formed, has been exhibited in the imperfect sketch given of his life. His efforts to establish that temporal power in his own person, of which he laid the foundation for his tribe, were daring and successful in as great a degree as circumstances would admit: but it was not possible he could create means, in a few years, to oppose, with success, the force of one of the greatest empires in the universe. The spirit, however, which he infused into his followers, was handed down as a rich inheritance to their children; who, though they consider Bábá Nánác as the author of their religion, revere, with a just gratitude, Gúrú Góvind, as the founder of their worldly greatness and political independence. They are conscious, indeed, that they have become, from the adoption of his laws and institutions, the scourge of their enemies; and have conquered and held, for more than half a century, the finest portion of the once great empire of the house of Timoor.

Gúrú Góvind was the last acknowledged religious ruler of the Sikhs. A prophecy had limited their spiritual guides to the number of ten; and their superstition, aided, no doubt, by the action of that spirit of independence which his institutions had introduced, caused its fulfilment. The success, however, of Banda, a Bairági, who was the devoted follower and friend of

* Meaning Sikhs; whose faith, though it differs widely from the present worship of the Hindús, has been thought to have considerable analogy to the pure and simple religion originally followed by that nation.

Gurú Góvind, established their union under his banners. A short period after Góvind's death, the grief of Banda at the misfortune of his priest, is said, by Sikh authors, to have settled into a gloomy and desperate desire to revenge his wrongs. The confusion which took place on the death of Aurungzeb, which happened in the year 1707, was favourable to his wishes. After plundering the country, and defeating most of the petty Muhammedan chiefs that were opposed to him, he thought himself sufficiently strong to venture on an action with Foujdar Khán, the governor of the province of Sarhind, and the man of all others most abhorred by the Sikhs, as the murderer of the infant children of Gurú Góvind. This action was fought with valour by the Muhammedans; and with all that desperation on the part of the Sikhs, which the most savage spirit of revenge could inspire: and this, aided by the courage and conduct of their leader, gave them the victory, after a severe contest. Foujdar Khán fell, with most of his army, to whom the enraged Sikhs gave no quarter. Nor was their savage revenge satiated by the destruction of the Muhammedan army: they put to death the wife and children of Vizír Khán, and almost all the inhabitants of Sarhind. They destroyed or polluted the mosques of that city; and, in a spirit of wild and brutal rage, dug up the carcasses of the dead, and exposed them to be devoured by beasts of prey. Encouraged by this success, and hardened by the lessons of Banda to deeds of the most horrid atrocity, the Sikhs rushed forward, and subdued all the country between the Sutláj and the Jumna; and, crossing that river, made inroads into the province of Sáháranpúr.* It is unnecessary to state the particulars of this memorable incursion, which, from all accounts, appears to have been one of

* This province lies a few miles to the N. E. of Delhi, between the rivers Jumna and Ganges.

2 the severest scourges with which a country was ever afflicted. Every excess that the most wanton barbarity could commit, every cruelty that an unappeased appetite of revenge could suggest, was inflicted upon the miserable inhabitants of the provinces through which they passed. Life was only granted to those who conformed to the religion, and adopted the habits and dress of the Sikhs ; and if Behádur Shah had not quitted the Dek'hin, which he did in A. D. 1710, there is reason to think the whole of Hindustan would have been subdued by these merciless invaders.

The first check the Sikhs received was from an army under Sultán Kúli Khán. That chief defeated one of their advanced corps at Pánipat'h, which, after being dispersed, fled to join their leader Banda, at Sarhind. The death of Behádur Shah prevented this success from being pursued ; and the confusion which followed that event, was favourable to the Sikhs. Banda defeated Islám Khán, the viceroy of Lahore, and one of his fanatic followers stabbed Báyezíd Khán, the governor of Sarhind, who had marched out of that town to encounter this army. This, however, was the last of Banda's successful atrocities. Abdal Sámad Khán, a general of great reputation, was detached, with a large army, by the emperor Farokhsir, against the Sikhs, whom he defeated in a very desperate action ; in which, agreeable to Muhammedan authors, Banda performed prodigies of valour, and was only obliged to give way to the superior numbers and discipline of the imperialists. The Sikhs were never able to make a stand after this defeat, and were hunted, like wild beasts, from one strong hold to another, by the army of the emperor ; by whom their leader, and his most devoted followers, were at last taken, after having suffered every extreme of hunger and fatigue.*

* They were taken in the fort of Lóhghad, which is one hundred miles to the north-east of Lahore. This fortress was completely sur-

Abdal Sámád Khán put to death great numbers of the Sikhs after the surrender of Lóhgad, the fortress in which they took refuge ; but sent Banda, and the principal chiefs of the tribe, to Delhi, where they were first treated with every kind of obloquy and insult, and then executed. A Muhammedan writer* relates the intrepidity with which these Sikh prisoners, but particularly their leader, Banda, met death. " It is singular," he writes, " that these people not only behaved firmly during the execution, but they would dispute and wrangle with each other who should suffer first ; and they made interest with the executioner to obtain the preference. Banda," he continues, " was at last produced, his son being seated in his lap. His father was ordered to cut his throat, which he did, without uttering one word. Being then brought nearer the magistrate's tribunal, the latter ordered his flesh to be torn off with red hot pincers ; and it was in those moments he expired : his black soul taking its flight, by one of those wounds, towards the regions for which it was so well fitted."

Thus perished Banda ; who, though a brave and able leader, was one of the most cruel and ferocious of men, and endeavoured to impart to his followers that feeling of merciless resentment which he cherished against the whole Muhammedan race, whom he appears to have thought accountable for the cruelty and oppression of a few individuals of the persuasion.†

rounded, and the Sikhs were only starved in to surrender, having been reduced to such extremes, that they were reported to have eaten, what to them must have been most horrible, the flesh of the cow.

* The author of the *Sier Mutakherin*.

† It is necessary, however, to state, that there is a schismatical sect of Sikhs, who are termed Bandái, or the followers of Banda, who totally deny this account of the death of Banda, and maintain that he escaped severely wounded from his last battle, and took refuge in B'habar, where he quietly ended his days, leaving two sons, Ajit Singh and Zoráwer Singh, who successfully propagated his doctrine. This sect chiefly resides in Multán, Tata, and the other cities on the banks of the Indus. They receive the Adi-Grant'h, but not the Dasama Padsháh ka Grant'h.

Though the Sikhs, from being animated by a similar feeling, and encouraged by his first successes, followed Banda to the field, they do not revere his memory ; and he is termed, by some of their authors, a heretic ; who, intoxicated with victory, endeavoured to change the religious institutions and laws of GÚRÚ GÓVIND, many of whose most devoted followers this fierce chief put to death, because they refused to depart from those usages which that revered spiritual leader had taught them to consider sacred. Among other changes, Banda wished to make the Sikhs abandon their blue dress, to refrain from drinking and eating flesh ; and, instead of exclaiming *Wá ! Gúrúji ki Futteh ! Wá ! Khálsagi ki Futteh !* the salutations directed by GÓVIND, he directed them to exclaim, *Futteh D'herm ! Futteh dersan !* which means, " Success to piety ! Success to the sect !" These innovations were very generally resisted ; but the dreaded severity of Banda made many conform to his orders. The class of Acálís,* or immortals, who had been established by GÚRÚ GÓVIND, continued to oppose the innovations with great obstinacy ; and many of them suffered martyrdom, rather than change either their mode of salutation, diet, or dress ; and, at the death of Banda, their cause triumphed. All the institutions of GÚRÚ GÓVIND were restored : but the blue dress, instead of being, as at first, worn by all, appears, from that date, to have become the particular right of the Acálís, whose valour, in its defence, well merited the exclusive privilege of wearing this original uniform of a true Sikh.

After the defeat and death of Banda, every measure was taken, that an active resentment could suggest, not only to destroy the power, but to extirpate the race of the Sikhs. An astonishing number of that sect must have fallen, in the last two or three years of the

* An account of this class of Sikhs will be hereafter given.

contest with the imperial armies, as the irritated Muhammedans gave them no quarter. After the execution of their chief, a royal edict was issued, ordering all who professed the religion of Nánac to be taken and put to death wherever found. To give effect to this mandate, a reward was offered for the head of every Sikh; and all Hindús were ordered to shave their hair off, under pain of death. The few Sikhs, that escaped this general execution, fled into the mountains to the N. E. of the Punjáub, where they found a refuge from the rigorous persecution by which their tribe was pursued; while numbers bent before the tempest which they could not resist, and abandoning the outward usages of their religion, satisfied their consciences with the secret practice of its rites.

From the defeat and death of Banda till the invasion of India by Nádir Shah, a period of nearly thirty years, we hear nothing of the Sikhs; but, on the occurrence of that event, they are stated to have fallen upon the peaceable inhabitants of the Punjáub, who sought shelter in the hills, and to have plundered them of that property which they were endeavouring to secure from the rapacity of the Persian invader.

Enriched with these spoils, the Sikhs left the hills, and built the fort of Dalewál, on the Rávee, from whence they made predatory incursions, and are stated to have added both to their wealth and reputation, by harassing and plundering the rear of Nadir Shah's army, which, when it returned to Persia, was encumbered with spoil, and marched, from a contempt of its enemies, with a disregard to all order.

The weak state to which the empire of Hindustan was reduced: and the confusion into which the provinces of Lahore and Cábul were thrown, by the death of Nádir; were events of too favourable a nature to the Sikhs to be neglected by that race, who became daily more bold, from their numbers being greatly

increased by the union of all those who had taken shelter in the mountains; the readmission into the sect of those who, to save their lives, had abjured, for a period, their usages; and the conversion of a number of proselytes, who hastened to join a standard, under which robbery was made sacred; and to plunder, was to be pious.

Aided with these recruits, the Sikhs now extended their irruptions over most of the provinces of the Punjáub: and though it was some time before they repossessed themselves of Umritsir, they began, immediately after they quitted their fastnesses, to flock to that holy city at the periods of their feasts. Some performed this pilgrimage in secret, and in disguise: but in general, according to a contemporary Muhammedan author, the Sikh horsemen were seen riding, at full gallop, towards "their favourite shrine of devotion. They were often slain in making this attempt, and sometimes taken prisoners; but they used, on such occasions, to seek, instead of avoiding, the crown of martyrdom: and the same authority states, that an instance was never known of a Sikh, taken in his way to Umritsir, consenting to abjure his faith."

It is foreign to the object of this sketch to enter into a detail of those effects by which the Sikhs rose into that power which they now possess. It will be sufficient to glance at the principal events which have marked their progress, from the period of their emerging from the mountains, to which they had been driven after the death of Banda, to that of the conquest and subjection of those fine provinces over which their rule is now established. This sect, as has been before stated, have never admitted a spiritual leader since the death of Gúrú Góvind. It was success, and the force of a savage but strong genius, which united them, for a period, under Banda; and they have, since his death, had no acknowledged general, leader, or prince. Each

individual followed to the field the Sirdar or chief, who, from birth, the possession of property, or from valour and experience, had become his superior. These chiefs again were of different rank and pretensions: a greater number of followers, higher reputation, the possession of wealth, or lands, constituted that difference; and, from one or other of these causes, one chief generally enjoyed a decided pre-eminence, and, consequently, had a lead in their military councils. But, nevertheless, they always went through the form of selecting a military leader at their Gúrú-matá, or national council; where, however, influence prevailed, and the most powerful was certain of being elected.

Such a mode of government was in itself little calculated to give that strength and union which the cause of the Sikhs required: but the peculiarities of their usages, the ardent character of their faith, the power of their enemies, and the oppression they endured, amply supplied the place of all other ordinances. To unite and to act in one body, and on one principle, was, with the first Sikhs, a law of necessity: it was, amid the dangers with which they were surrounded, their only hope of success, and their sole means of preservation: and it was to these causes, combined with the weakness and internal contests of their enemies, to which this sect owes its extraordinary rise,—not to their boasted constitution; which, whether we call it an oligarchy, which it really is; or a theocracy, which the Sikhs consider it; has not a principle in its composition that would preserve it one day from ruin, if vigorously assailed. But of this their history will furnish the best example.

Encouraged by the confusion which took place on the first Afghán* invasion, the Sikhs made themselves masters of a considerable part of the Doáb of Rávee

* A. D. 1746.

and Jalendra,* and extended their incursions to the neighbouring countries. They, however, at this period received several severe checks from Mír Manu, the governor of Lahore, who is said, by Muhammedan authors, to have been only withheld from destroying them by the counsel of his minister, Kodá Mal, who was himself a Sikh of the Khalása† tribe. Mír Manu appointed Adína Bég Khán to the charge of the countries in which the Sikhs maintained themselves; and, as that able but artful chief considered this turbulent tribe in no other light than as the means of his personal advancement, he was careful not to reduce them altogether; but, after defeating them in an action, which was fought near Mak'havál, he entered into a secret understanding with them, by which, though their excursions were limited, they enjoyed a security to which they had been unaccustomed, and from which they gathered strength and resources for future efforts.

At the death of Mír Manu,‡ the Sikhs took all those advantages, which the local distractions of a falling empire offered them, of extending and establishing their power. Their bands, under their most active leaders, plundered in every direction, and were successful in obtaining possession of several countries, from which they have never since been expelled: and their success, at this period, was promoted, instead of being checked, by the appointment of their old friend Adína Beg Khán, to Lahore; as that brave chief, anxious to defend his own government against the Afgháns, im-

* The country between the rivers Ravee and Báyah, and that river and the Sutláj.

† A sect of non-conformist Sikhs, who believe in the Adi-Grant'h of Nánac, but do not conform to the institutions of Gúrá Góvind. They are called Khalása. This word is said, by some, to be from *khális*, *pure* or *select*, and to mean the purest, or the select: by others, from *khalás*, *free*, and to mean the freed or exempt, alluding to the tribe being exempt from the usages imposed on the other Sikhs.

‡ A. D. 1752.

mediately entered into a confederacy with the Sikhs, whom he encouraged to plunder the territories of Ahmed Shah Abdáli.

The Afghán monarch, resenting this predatory warfare, in which the governor of Lahore was supported by the court of Delhi, determined upon invading India. Adína Bég, unable to oppose him, fled; and the Sikhs could only venture to plunder the baggage, and cut off the stagglers of the Afghán army: by which they so irritated Ahmed Shah, that he threatened them with punishment on his return; and, when he marched to Cábul, he left his son, Timoor Khán, and his vizir, Jehán Khán, at Lahore, with orders to take vengeance on the Sikhs for all the excesses which they had committed. The first expedition of Timoor Khán was against their capital, Umritsir, which he destroyed, filling up their sacred tank, and polluting all their places of worship: by which action he provoked the whole race to such a degree that they all assembled at Lahore, and not only attempted to cut off the communication between the fort and country, but collected and divided the revenues of the towns and villages around it. Timoor Khán, enraged at this presumption, made several attacks upon them, but was constantly defeated; and being at last reduced to the necessity of evacuating Lahore, and retreating to Cábul, the Sikhs, under one of their celebrated leaders, called Jasa Singh Calál, immediately took possession of the vacant Subah of Lahore, and ordered rupees to be coined, with an inscription to the following import: "Coined by the grace of Khálsah jí, in the country of Ahmed, conquered by Jasa Singh Calál."

X

The Sikhs, who were so deeply indebted to the forbearance of Adína Bég Khán, now considered themselves above the power of that chief; who, in order to regain his government from them and the Afgháns, was obliged to invite the Mahráta leaders, Raghunát'h

Ráo, Saheb Pateil, and Malhár Ráo, to enter the Punjáub. Aided by these chiefs, he first advanced to Sarhind, where he was joined by some Sikhs that remained attached to him. Samad Khán, the officer who had been left in charge of Sarhind by Ahmed Khán, found himself obliged to evacuate that place ; which he had no sooner done, than the Sikhs began to plunder. The Mahrátas, always jealous of their booty, determined to attack and punish them for this violation of what they deemed their exclusive privilege : but Adína Bég receiving intelligence of their intentions, communicated it to the Sikhs ; who, taking advantage of the darkness of the night, saved themselves by flight.

After the fall of Sarhind, the Mahrátas, accompanied by Adína Bég Khán, advanced to Lahore, and soon expelled both the Sikhs and the Afgháns from the principal towns of the provinces of Sarhind and Lahore ; of which they not only took possession, but sent a governor to the province of Multán ; and Saheb Pateil advanced to the Attock,* where he remained for a few months. But the commotions of Hindústán and the Dek'hin soon obliged these foreigners to abandon the Punjáub ; which they did the same year they had reduced it. They appointed Adína Bég Khán governor of Lahore. He died in the ensuing year ; and, by his death, afforded an opportunity to the Sikhs, which they eagerly seized, to make themselves again masters of the province of Lahore. Their success was, however soon checked by Ahmed Shah Abdáli ; who, irritated by their unsubdued turbulence, and obstinate intrepidity, made every effort (after he had gained the victory of Pániput, which established his supremacy at Dehli) to destroy their power ; and, with this view, he

* The empire of the Mahrátas had, at this proud moment, reached its zenith. The battle of Pániput took place soon afterwards ; since which it has rapidly declined.

entered the Punjáub early in 1762, and overran the whole of that country with a numerous army, defeating and dispersing the Sikhs in every direction. That sect, unable to make any stand against the army of the Abdáli, pursued their old plan of retreating near the mountains; and collected a large force in the northern districts of Sarhind, a distance of above one hundred miles from Lahore, where the army of Ahmed Shah was encamped. Here they conceived themselves to be in perfect safety: but that prince made one of those rapid movements for which he was so celebrated, and reaching the Sikh army on the second day, completely surprised, and defeated it with great slaughter. In this action, which was fought in February, 1762, the Sikhs are said to have lost upwards of twenty thousand men, and the remainder fled into the hills, abandoning all the lower countries to the Afgháns, who committed every ravage that a barbarous and savage enemy could devise. Umritsir was razed to the ground, and the sacred reservoir again choaked with its ruins. Pyramids* were erected, and covered with the heads of slaughtered Sikhs: and it is mentioned, that Ahmed Shah caused the walls of those mosques, which the Sikhs had polluted, to be washed with their blood, that the contamination might be removed, and the insult offered to the religion of Muhammed expiated.†

This species of savage retaliation appears to have animated, instead of depressing, the courage of the Sikhs; who, though they could not venture to meet Ahmed Shah's army in action, harassed it with an incessant predatory warfare; and, when that sovereign was obliged, by the commotions of Afghanistan, to return to Cábul, they attacked and defeated the general

* This is a very common usage amongst eastern conquerors. The history of Jénghez Khán, Timoor and Nádir Shah, afford many examples of this mode of treating their vanquished enemies.

† Foster's Travels, Vol. I. p. 279.

he had left in Lahore, and made themselves masters of that city, in which they levelled with the ground those mosques which the Afghans had, a few months before, purified with the blood of their brethren.

Ahmed Shah, in 1763, retook Lahore, and plundered the provinces around it; but, being obliged to return to his own country in the ensuing year, the Sikhs again expelled his garrison, and made themselves masters of the Punjaub; and, from that period until his death, a constant war was maintained, in which the enterprise and courage of the Afgháns gradually gave way before the astonishing activity and invincible perseverance of their enemies; who, if unable to stand a general action, retreated to impenetrable mountains, and the moment they saw an advantage, rushed again into the plains with renewed vigour, and recruited numbers. Several Sikh authors, treating of the events of this period, mention a great action having been fought, by their countrymen, near Umritsir, against the whole Afghán army, commanded by Ahmed Shah in person; but they differ with regard to the date of this battle, some fixing it in 1762, and others later. They pretend that the Sikhs, inspired by the sacredness of the ground on which this action was fought, contended for victory against superior numbers with the most desperate fury, and that the battle terminated in both parties quitting the field, without either being able to claim the least advantage. The historians of Ahmed Shah are, however, silent regarding this action; which, indeed, from all the events of his long contests with the Sikhs, appears unlikely to have occurred. It is possible the Sikhs fought, at Umritsir, with a division of the Afghán army, and that might have been commanded by the prince: but it is very improbable they had ever force to encounter the concentrated army of the Abdális; before which, while it remained in a body, they appear, from the first to the

last of their contests with that prince, to have always retreated or rather fled.

The internal state of Afghánistan, since the death of Ahmed Shah, has prevented the progress of the Sikh nation receiving any serious check from that quarter ; and the distracted and powerless condition of the empire of India has offered province after province to their usurpation. Their history, during this latter period, affords little but a relation of village warfare, and predatory incursions. Their hostilities were first directed against the numerous Muhammedan chiefs who were settled in the Punjáub, and who defended, as long as they could, their jágirs, or estates, against them : but these have either been conquered, or reduced to such narrow limits, as to owe their security to their insignificance, or the precarious friendship of some powerful Sikh chief, whose support they have gained : and who, by protecting them against the other leaders of his tribe, obtains a slight accession of strength and influence.

The Sikh nation, who have, throughout their early history, always appeared, like a suppressed flame, to rise into higher splendour from every attempt to crush them, had become, while they were oppressed, as formidable for their union, as for their determined courage and unconquerable spirit of resistance : but a state of persecution and distress was the one most favourable for the action of a constitution like theirs ; which, formed upon general and abstract principles, required constant and great sacrifices of personal advantage to the public good ; and such can alone be expected from men, acting under the influence of that enthusiasm, which the fervour of a new religion, or a struggle for independence, can alone impart, and which are ever most readily made, when it becomes obvious to all, that a complete union in the general cause is the only hope of individual safety.

The Sikhs would appear, from their own historians,

to have attributed the conquests they made entirely to their valour, and to have altogether forgot that they owed them chiefly to the decline of the house of Ti-moor, and the dissensions of the government of Cábul. Intoxicated with their success, they have given way to all those passions which assail the minds of men in the possession of power. The desire, which every petty chief entertained, of increasing his territories, of building strong forts, and adding to the numbers of his troops, involved them in internal wars ; and these, however commenced, soon communicated to numbers, who engaged in the dispute as passion or interest dictated. Though such feuds have, no doubt, helped to maintain their military spirit, yet their extent and virulence have completely broken down that union, which their great legislator, Góvind, laboured to establish. Quarrels have been transmitted from father to son ; and, in a country where the infant is devoted to *steel*, and taught to consider war as his only occupation, these could not but multiply in an extraordinary degree ; and, independent of the comparative large conquests in which the greater chiefs occasionally engaged, every village* has become an object of dispute, and there are few, if any, in the Punjáub, the rule of which is not contested between brothers or near relations.† In such a state, it is obvious, the Sikhs could alone be formidable to the most weak and distracted governments. Such, indeed, was the character, till within a very late period, of all their neighbours ; and

* All the villages in the Punjaub are walled round ; as they are in almost all the countries of India that are exposed to sudden incursions of horse, which this defence can always repel.

† When the British and Máhráta armies entered the Punjáub, they were both daily joined by discontented petty chiefs of the Sikhs, who offered their aid to the power that would put them in the possession of a village or a fort, from which, agreeably to their statement, they had been unjustly excluded by a father or brother. Holkar encouraged these applications, and used them to his advantage. The British commander abstained from all interference in such disputes.

they continued to plunder, with impunity, the upper provinces of Hindústán, until the establishment of the power of Dowlut Rao Sindíá, when the regular brigades commanded by French officers in the service of that prince, not only checked their inroads, but made all the Sikh chiefs, to the southward of the Sutláj, acknowledge obedience and pay tribute to Sindíá: and it was in the contemplation of General Perron, had the war with the English government not occurred, to have subdued the Punjáub, and made the Indus the limit of his possession: and every person acquainted with his means, and with the condition and resources of the Sikhs, must be satisfied he would have accomplished this project with great ease, and at a very early period.

When Holkar fled into the Punjáub, in 1805, and was pursued by that illustrious British commander, Lord Lake, a complete opportunity was given of observing the actual state of this nation, which was found weak and distracted, in a degree that could hardly have been imagined. It was altogether destitute of union. And though a Gúrú-matá, or national council was called, with a view to decide on those means by which they could best avert the danger by which their country was threatened, from the presence of the English and Mahráta armies, it was attended by few chiefs: and most of the absentees, who had any power, were bold and forward in their offers to resist any resolution to which this council might come. The intrigues and negotiations of all appeared, indeed, at this moment, to be entirely directed to objects of personal resentment, or personal aggrandizement; and every shadow of that concord, which once formed the strength of the Sikh nation, seemed to be extinguished.

CHAPTER V.

HISTORY OF THE SIKHS AND THEIR RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS.—(*Continued.*)

Countries possessed by the Sikhs—Their form of Government—Hindoo usage with regard to Diet—Jat and Gujar Tribes—The Acalis or Sikh Devotees—The Gurmata or Great National Council—The Mehzebi Singh, or Singhs of the Faith—Administration of Justice—Character of the Sikhs—The Sikh Merchant or Cultivator—Spirituuous Liquors and Opium used by the Sikhs—The conduct of the Sikhs towards their Women—The Sikhs almost all Horsemen—Temperate in their Diet—Character of the Sikh Leaders—Sikh Religion—Guru Govind mixes the Mythology of the Hindus with his own tenets—Pahal, the ceremony by which a convert is initiated into the Sikh Tribe, &c. &c. &c.

— NEITHER the limits of this sketch, nor the materials from which it is drawn, will admit of my giving a particular or correct account of the countries possessed by the Sikhs, or of their forms of government, manners, and habits : but a cursory view of these subjects may be useful, and may excite and direct that curiosity which it cannot expect to gratify.

The country now possessed by the Sikhs, which reaches from latitute 28° 40' to beyond latitude 32° N., and includes all the Punjáub,* a small part of Multán, and most of that tract of country which lies between the Jumna and the Sutláj, is bounded, to the

* A general estimate of the value of the country possessed by the Sikhs may be formed, when it is stated, that it contains, besides other countries, the whole of the province of Lahore ; which, agreeable to Mr. Bernier, produced, in the reign of Aurungzéb, two hundred and forty-six lacks and ninety-five thousand rupees ; or two millions, four hundred and sixty-nine thousand, five hundred pounds sterling.

northward and westward, by the territories of the king of Cábul ; to the eastward, by the possessions of the mountaineer Rájás of Jammu, Nadón, and Srínagar ; and to the southward, by the territories of the English government, and sandy deserts of Jasalmér and Hánsy Hisár.

The Sikhs, who inhabit the country between the Sutláj and the Jumna, are called Málawá Singh, and were almost all converted from the Hindú tribes of Játs and Gujars. The title of Málawá Singh was conferred upon them for their extraordinary gallantry, under the Baírágí Banda, who is stated to have declared, that the countries granted to them should be fruitful as Málwá, one of the provinces* in India. The principal chiefs among the Málawá Singhs, are, Sáheb Singh, of Patiála ; B'hangá Singh, of T'hánésur ; B'hág Singh, of Jhind ; and B'hailal Singh, of Keintal. Besides these, there are several inferior chiefs, such as Gúrúdah Singh, Jud'h Singh, and Carm Singh ; all of whom have a few villages, and some horse, and consider themselves independent ; though they, in general, are content to secure their possessions by attaching themselves to one or other of the powerful leaders.

The country of the Málawá Singh is, in some parts, fruitful : but those districts of it, which border on Hánsy and Carnál, are very barren ; being covered with low wood, and, in many places, almost destitute of water. Sarhind was formerly the capital of this country ; but it is now a complete ruin, and has probably never recovered the dreadful ravages of the Baírágí Banda, who is stated not only to have destroyed its mosques, but to have levelled all its palaces and public buildings with the ground. Patiálá is now the largest and most flourishing town of this province, and next to it T'hánésur, which is still held in high re-

* This province now forms almost the whole territory of Dowlut Ráo Sindia.

ligious veneration by the Hindús; who have also a very high reverence for the river Seraswetí, which flows through this province. The territories of the chiefs of Málawá Singh are bounded to the N. W. by the Sutláj; between which and the Bélyah, is the country called the Jaléndra Beit, or Jaléndra Dúábá; the Sikhs inhabiting which are called the Dúábá Singh, or the Singhs who dwell between the rivers.* The country of Jaléndra Dúáb, which reaches from the mountains to the junction of the Sutláj and the Bélyah, is the most fruitful of all the possessions of the Sikhs; and is, perhaps, excelled in climate and vegetation by no province of India. The soil is light, but very productive: the country, which is open and level, abounds with every kind of grain. That want of water, which is so much felt in other parts of India, must be here unknown; as it is found every where in abundance, within two, or at furthest three, feet from the surface of the soil. The towns of Jaléndra and Sultánpúr are the principal in the Dúáb.

The country between the Bélyah and Rávee rivers is called Bári Dúáb, or Mánj'há; and the Sikhs inhabiting it are called Mánj'há Singh. The cities of Lahore and Umritsir are both in this province; and it becomes, in consequence, the great centre of the power of this nation. Runjeet Singh, of Lahore; Fateh Singh,† of Alluwál; and Jud'h Singh, of Rámgadiá;‡ are the principal chiefs of this country.

The country of Bári is said to be less fertile, particularly towards the mountains, than Jaléndra; but, as it lies on the same level, it must possess nearly the same climate and soil.

* With the chiefs of the Sikhs in the Jaléndra Dúáb we are little acquainted. Tára Singh is the most considerable; but he and the others have been greatly weakened by their constant and increasing internal divisions.

† Fateh Singh is, like Runjeet Singh, of a Ját family.

‡ Jud'h Singh, of Rámgadiá, is of the carpenter caste.

The inhabitants of the country between the Rávee and Chenáb are called D'harpí Singh, from the country being called D'harpí. The D'haníghéb Singh are beyond the Chenáb,* but within the Jéhalam river.

The Sind Singh is the term by which the inhabitants of the districts under the Sikhs, bordering on the Sind, are known; and Nakái Singh is the name given to the Sikhs who reside in Multán. With the leaders of the Sikhs in these provinces, the extent of their possessions, or the climate and productions of the country under their rule, I am little acquainted. Those in Multán, as well as those settled on the river Jéhalam, are said to be constantly engaged in a predatory warfare, either with the officers of the Afghán government, or with Muhammedan chiefs who have jágírs in their vicinity.

The government of the Sikhs, considered in its theory, may, as has been before stated, be termed a theocracy. They obey a temporal chief, it is true; but that chief preserves his power and authority by professing himself the servant of the Khálsá,† or government, which can only be said to act, in times of great public emergency, through the means of a national council, of which every chief is a member, and which is supposed to deliberate and resolve under the immediate inspiration and impulse of an invisible being; who, they believe, always watches over the interests of the commonwealth.

The nature of the power established by the temporal chiefs of the Sikhs, has been sufficiently explained in

* The term Gujarát Singh is sometimes given to the inhabitants of this Dúáb, of which the chiefs of Gujarát and Rotás are the principal rulers.

† The word Khálsá, which has before been explained to mean the state or commonwealth, is supposed, by the Sikhs, to have a mystical meaning, and to imply that superior government, under the protection of which "they live, and to the established rules and laws of which, as fixed by Gúrá Góvind, it is their civil and religious duty to conform."

the narrative of their history. It will be necessary, before any account is given of the forms and actions of their Gúrú-matá, or great national council, which is intended to have a supreme authority over their federative republic, to take a view of that body of Acálís, or immortals, who, under the double character of fanatic priests and desperate soldiers, have usurped the sole direction of all religious affairs at Umritsir, and are, consequently, leading men in a council which is held at that sacred place, and which deliberates under all the influence of religious enthusiasm.

The Acálís* are a class of Sikh devotees; who, agreeably to the historians of that nation, were first founded by Gúrú Góvind, whose institutes, as it has been before stated, they most zealously defended against the innovations of the Bairágí Banda. They wear blue chequered clothes, and bangles, or bracelets of steel,† round their wrists, initiate converts, and have almost the sole direction of the religious ceremonies at Umritsir, where they reside, and of which they deem themselves the defenders; and, consequently, never desire to quit it unless in cases of great extremity.

* Acáli, derived from Acál, a compound term of *cál*, *death*, and the Sanscrit privative *a*, which means *never-dying*, or *immortal*. It is one of the names of the Divinity; and has, probably, been given to this remarkable class of devotees, from their always exclaiming Acál! Acál! in their devotions.

† All Singhs do not wear bracelets; but it is indispensable to have steel about their persons, which they generally have in the shape of a knife or dagger. In support of this ordinance they quote the following verses of Gúrú Góvind:

Sáheb beá ki rach'ha hamné,
Tuhi Srí Sáheb, churi, káti, katár—
Acál purukh ki rach'ha hamné,
Serv lóh di rach'ha hamné,
Servacál di rach'ha hamné,
Serv lohji di sada rach'ha hamné.

which may be translated: "The protection of the infinite Lord is over us: thou art the lord, the cutlass, the knife, and the dagger. The protection of the immortal Being is over us: the protection of ALL-STEEL is over us: the protection of ALL-TIME is over us: the protection of ALL-STEEL is constantly over us."

This order of Sikhs have a place, or Bungá,* on the bank of the sacred reservoir of Umritsir, where they generally resort, but are individually possessed of property, though they affect poverty, and subsist upon charity; which, however, since their numbers have increased, they generally extort, by accusing the principal chiefs of crimes, imposing fines upon them; and, in the event of their refusing to pay, preventing them from performing their ablutions, or going through any of their religious ceremonies at Umritsir.

It will not, when the above circumstances are considered, be thought surprising, that the most powerful of the Sikh chiefs should desire to conciliate this body of fanatics, no individual of which can be offended with impunity, as the cause of one is made the cause of the whole; and a chief, who is become unpopular with the Acális, must not only avoid Umritsir, but is likely to have his dependants taught, when they pay their devotions at that place, that it is pious to resist his authority.

The Acális have a great interest in maintaining both the religion and government of the Sikhs, as established by Gúrú Góvind; as, on its continuance in that shape, their religious and political influence must depend. Should Umritsir cease to be a place of resort, or be no longer considered as the religious capital of the state, in which all questions that involve the general interests of the commonwealth are to be decided, this formidable order would at once fall from that power and consideration which they now possess, to a level with other mendicants.

* The Shahíd and Nirmala, two other religious tribes among the Sikhs, have Bungás, or places, upon the great reservoir of Umritsir; but both these are peaceful orders of priests, whose duty is to address the Deity, and to read and explain the Ádi-Grant'h to the Sikhs. They are, in general, men of some education. A Sikh of any tribe may be admitted into either of these classes, as among the Acális, who admit all into their body who choose to conform to their rules.

When a Gúrú-matá, or great national council, is called, (as it always is, or ought to be, when any imminent danger threatens the country, or any large expedition is to be undertaken,) all the Sikh chiefs assemble at Umritsir. The assembly, which is called the Gúrú-matá, is convened by the Acális ; and when the chiefs meet upon this solemn occasion, it is concluded that all private animosities cease, and that every man sacrifices his personal feelings at the shrine of the general good ; and, actuated by principles of pure patriotism, thinks of nothing but the interests of the religion and commonwealth to which he belongs.

When the chiefs and principal leaders are seated, the Adi-Grant'h and Dasama Pádsháh ka Grant'h are placed before them. They all bend their heads before these scriptures, and exclaim, *Wá ! Gúrúji ka Khálsa ! Wá ! Gúrúji ki Fateh !* A great quantity of cakes, made of wheat, butter, and sugar, are then placed before the volumes of their sacred writings, and covered with a cloth. These holy cakes, which are in commemoration of the injunction of Nánac, to eat and to give to others to eat, next receive the salutation of the assembly, who then rise, and the Acális pray aloud, while the musicians play. The Acális, when the prayers are finished, desire the council to be seated. They sit down, and the cakes being uncovered, are eaten of by all classes* of Sikhs : those distinctions of original tribes, which are, on other occasions, kept up, being on this occasion laid aside, in token of their general and complete union in one cause.† The Acá-

* A custom of a similar nature, with regard to all tribes eating promiscuously, is observed among the Hindús, at the temple of Jagannáth, where men of all religions and castes, without distinction, eat of the Mahá Prasád, *the great offering* ; i. e. food dressed by the cooks of the idols, and sold on the stairs of the temple.

† The Sikh priest, who gave an account of this custom, was of a high Hindú tribe ; and, retaining some of his prejudices, he at first said, that Muhammedan Sikhs, and those who were converts from the

lis then exclaim : “ Sirdars ! (chiefs) this is a Gúrú-matá !” on which prayers are again said aloud. The chiefs, after this, sit closer, and say to each other : “ The sacred Grant’h is betwixt us, let us swear by our scripture to forget all internal disputes, and to be united.” This moment of religious fervor and ardent patriotism, is taken to reconcile all animosities. They then proceed to consider the danger with which they are threatened, to settle the best plans for averting it, and to choose the generals who are to lead their armies* against the common enemy. The first Gúrú-matá was assembled by Gúrú Góvind ; and the latest was called in 1805, when the British army pursued Holkar into the Punjáub.

The principal chiefs of the Sikhs are all descended from Hindú tribes. There is, indeed, no instance of a Singh of a Muhammedan family attaining high power : † a circumstance to be accounted for from the hatred still cherished, by the followers of Gúrú Góvind against the descendants of his persecutors : and that this rancorous spirit is undiminished, may be seen from their treatment of the wretched Muhammedans who yet remain in their territories. These, though very numerous, appear to be all poor, and to be an oppressed, despised race. They till the ground, and are employed to carry burdens, and to do all kinds of hard

sweeper cast, were obliged, even on this occasion, to eat a little apart from the other Sikhs : but, on being closely questioned, he admitted the fact as stated in the narrative ; saying, however, it was only on this solemn occasion that these tribes are admitted to eat with the others.

* The army is called, when thus assembled, the Dal Khálsá, or the army of the state.

† The Muhammedans who have become Sikhs, and their descendants, are, in the Punjábi jargon, termed Mezhebi Singh, or Singhs of the faith ; and they are subdivided into the four classes which are vulgarly, but erroneously, supposed to distinguish the followers of Muhammed, Sayyad Singh, Sheikh Singh, Moghul Singh, and Patán Singh ; by which designations the names of the particular race or country of the Muhammedans have been affixed, by Hindús, as distinctions of caste.

labour : they are not allowed to eat beef, or to say their prayers aloud, and but seldom assemble in their mosques ;* of which few, indeed, have escaped destruction. The lower order of Sikhs are more happy : they are protected from the tyranny and violence of the chiefs, under whom they live, by the precepts of their common religion, and by the condition of their country, which enables them to abandon, whenever they choose, a leader whom they dislike ; and the distance of a few miles generally places them under the protection of his rival and enemy. It is from this cause that the lowest Sikh horseman usually assumes a very independent style, and the highest chief treats his military followers with attention and conciliation. The civil officers,—to whom the chiefs intrust their accounts, and the management of their property and revenue concerns, as well as the conduct of their negotiations,—are, in general, Sikhs of the Khalása caste ; who, being followers of Nánac, and not of Gúrú Góvind, are not devoted to arms, but educated for peaceful occupations, in which they often become very expert and intelligent.

In the collection of the revenue in the Punjáub it is stated to be a general rule, that the chiefs, to whom the territories belong, should receive one-half of the produce,† and the farmer the other : but the chief never levies the whole of his share : and in no country, perhaps, is the Rayat, or cultivator, treated with more indulgence. Commerce is not so much encouraged ; heavy duties are levied upon it by all petty rulers through whose districts it passes : and this, added to the distracted state in which the Punjáub has

* The Muhammedan inhabitants of the Punjáub used to flock to the British camp ; where, they said, they enjoyed luxuries which no man could appreciate that had not suffered privation. They could pray aloud, and feast upon beef.

† Grain pays in kind ; sugar-cane, melons, &c. pay in cash.

been, from the internal disputes of its possessors, caused the rich produce of Cáshmere to be carried to India by the difficult and mountainous tract of Jammu, Nadón, and Sínagar. The Sikh chiefs have, however, discovered the injury which their interests have suffered from this cause, and have endeavoured, and not without success, to restore confidence to the merchant ; and great part of the shawl trade now flows through the cities of Lahore, Umritsir, and Patialá, to Hindústán.

The administration of justice in the countries under the Sikhs, is in a very rude and imperfect state : for, though their scriptures inculcate general maxims of justice, they are not considered, as the Old Testament is by the Jews, or the Kóran by the Muhammedans, as books of law : and, having no fixed code, they appear to have adopted that irregular practice, which is most congenial to the temper of the people, and best suited to the unsteady and changing character of their rule of government. The following appears to be the general outline of their practice in the administration of justice.

Trifling disputes about property are settled by the heads of the village, by arbitration,* or by the chiefs. Either of these modes, supposing the parties consent to refer to it, is final ; and they must agree to one or other. If a theft occurs, the property is recovered, and the party punished by the person from whom it was stolen, who is aided on such occasions by the inhabitants of his village, or his chief. The punishment, however, is never capital.† Murder is generally re-

* This is called Panchayat, or a court of five ; the general number of arbitrators chosen to adjust differences and disputes. It is usual to assemble a Panchayat, or a court of arbitration, in every part of India, under a native government ; and, as they are always chosen from men of the best reputation in the place where they meet, this court has a high character for justice.

† A Sikh priest, who has been several years in Calcutta, gave this outline of the administration of justice among his countrymen. He

vengeed by the relations of the deceased, who, in such cases, rigorously retaliate on the murderer, and often on all who endeavour to protect him.

The character of the Sikhs, or rather Singhs, which is the name by which the followers of Gúrú Góvind, who are all devoted to arms, are distinguished, is very marked. They have, in general, the Hindú caste of countenance, somewhat altered by their long beards, and are to the full as active as the Mahrátas; and much more robust, from their living fuller, and enjoying a better and colder climate. Their courage is equal, at all times, to that of any natives of India; and when wrought upon by prejudice or religion, is quite desperate. They are all horsemen, and have no infantry in their own country, except for the defence of their forts and villages, though they generally serve as infantry in foreign armies. They are bold, and rather rough, in their address; which appears more to a stranger from their invariably speaking in a loud tone* of voice: but this is quite a habit, and is alike used by them to express the sentiments of regard and hatred. The Sikhs have been reputed deceitful and cruel; but I know no grounds upon which they can be considered more so than the other tribes of India. They seemed to me, from all the intercourse I had with them, to be more open and sincere than the Mahrátas, and less rude and savage than the Afgháns. They have,

spoke of it with rapture; and insisted, with true patriotic prejudice, on its great superiority over the vexatious system of the English government; which was, he said, tedious, vexatious, and expensive, and advantageous only to clever rogues.

* Talking aloud is so habitual to a Sikh, that he bawls a secret in your ear. It has often occurred to me, that they have acquired it from living in a country where internal disputes have so completely destroyed confidence, that they can only carry on conversation with each other at a distance: but it is fairer, perhaps, to impute this boisterous and rude habit to their living almost constantly in a camp, in which the voice certainly loses that nice modulated tone which distinguishes the more polished inhabitants of cities.

indeed, become, from national success, too proud of their own strength, and too irritable in their tempers, to have patience for the wiles of the former ; and they retain, in spite of their change of manners and religion, too much of the original character of their Hindú ancestors, (for the great majority are of the Hindú race,) to have the constitutional ferocity of the latter. The Sikh soldier is, generally speaking, brave, active, and cheerful, without polish, but neither destitute of sincerity nor attachment ; and if he often appears wanting in humanity, it is not so much to be attributed to his national character, as to the habits of a life, which, from the condition of the society in which he is born, is generally passed in scenes of violence and rapine.

The Sikh merchant, or cultivator of the soil, if he is a Singh, differs little in character from the soldier, except that his occupation renders him less presuming and boisterous. He also wears arms, and is, from education, prompt to use them whenever his individual interest, or that of the community in which he lives,* requires him to do so. The general occu-

* The old Sikh soldier generally returns to his native village, where his wealth, courage, or experience, always obtains him respect, and sometimes station and consequence. The second march which the British army made into the country of the Sikhs, the head-quarters were near a small village, the chief of which, who was upwards of a hundred years of age, had been a soldier, and retained all the look and manner of his former occupation. He came to me, and expressed his anxiety to see Lord Lake. I showed him the general, who was sitting alone, in his tent, writing. He smiled, and said he knew better : " The hero who had overthrown Sindiá and Holkár, and had conquered Hindústán, must be surrounded with attendants, and have plenty of persons to write for him." I assured him that it was Lord Lake ; and, on his lordship coming to breakfast, I introduced the old Singh, who, seeing a number of officers collect round him, was at last satisfied of the truth of what I said ; and, pleased with the great kindness and condescension with which he was treated by one whom he justly thought so great a man, sat down on the carpet, became quite talkative, and related all he had seen, from the invasion of Nádir Shah to that moment. Lord Lake, pleased with the bold manliness of his address, and the independence of his sentiments, told him he would

pations of the Khalása Sikhs has been before mentioned. Their character differs widely from that of the Singhs. Full of intrigue, pliant, versatile, and insinuating, they have all the art of the lower classes of Hindús, who are usually employed in transacting business: from whom, indeed, as they have no distinction of dress, it is very difficult to distinguish them.

The religious tribes of Acálís, Shahíd, and Nirmala, have been noticed. Their general character is formed from their habits of life. The Acálís are insolent, ignorant, and daring: presuming upon those rights which their numbers and fanatic courage have established, their deportment is hardly tolerant to the other Sikhs, and insufferable to strangers, for whom they entertain a contempt, which they take little pains to conceal. The Shahíd and the Nirmala, particularly the latter, have more knowledge, and more urbanity. They are almost all men of quiet, peaceable habits; and many of them are said to possess learning.

There is another tribe among the Sikhs, called the Nanác Pautra, or descendants of Nanác, who have the character of being a mild, inoffensive race; and, though they do not acknowledge the institutions of Gúrú Góvind, they are greatly revered by his followers, who hold it sacrilege to injure the race of their founder; and, under the advantage which this general veneration affords them, the Nánac Pautra pursue their oc-

grant him any favour he wished. "I am glad of it," said the old man; "then march away with your army from my village, which will otherwise be destroyed." Lord Lake, struck with the noble spirit of the request, assured him he would march next morning, and that, in the mean-time, he should have guards, who would protect his village from injury. Satisfied with this assurance, the old Singh was retiring, apparently full of admiration and gratitude at Lord Lake's goodness, and of wonder at the scene he had witnessed, when, meeting two officers at the door of the tent, he put a hand upon the breast of each, exclaiming at the same time, "*Brothers! where were you born, and where are you at this moment?*" and, without waiting for an answer, proceeded to his village.

cupations ; which, if they are not mendicants, is generally that of travelling merchants. They do not carry arms ; and profess, agreeably to the doctrine of Nánac, to be at peace* with all mankind.

The Sikh converts, it has been before stated, continue, after they have quitted their original religion, all those civil usages and customs of the tribes to which they belonged, that they can practise, without infringing the tenets of Nánac, or the institutions of Gúrú Góvind. They are most particular with regard to their intermarriages ; and, on this point, Sikhs descended from Hindús almost invariably conform to Hindú customs, every tribe intermarrying within itself. The Hindú usage, regarding diet, is also held equally sacred ; no Sikh, descended from a Hindú family, ever violating it, except upon particular occasions, such as a Gúrú-matá, when they are obliged, by their tenets and institutions, to eat promiscuously. The strict observance of these usages has enabled many of the Sikhs, particularly of the Ját† and Gujar‡ tribes, which include almost all those settled to the south of the Sutláj, to preserve an intimate intercourse with their original tribes ; who, considering the Sikhs not as having lost caste, but as Hindús that have joined a political association, which obliges them to conform

* When Lord Lake entered the Punjáub, in 1805, a general protection was requested, by several principal chiefs, for the Nánac Pautra, on the ground of the veneration in which they were held, which enabled them, it was stated, to travel all over the country without molestation, even when the most violent wars existed. It was, of course, granted.

† The Játas are Hindús of a low tribe, who, taking advantage of the decline of the Moghul empire, have, by their courage and enterprise, raised themselves into some consequence on the north-western parts of Hindustan, and many of the strongest forts of that part of India are still in their possession.

‡ The Gujars, who are also Hindús, have raised themselves to power by means not dissimilar to those used by the Játas. Almost all the thieves in Hindústán are of this tribe.

to general rules established for its preservation, neither refuse to intermarry* nor to eat with them.

The higher caste of Hindús, such as Brahmens and and Cshatriyas, who have become Sikhs, continue to intermarry with converts of their own tribes, but not with Hindús of the caste they have abandoned, as they are polluted by eating animal food ; all kinds of which are lawful to Sikhs, except the cow, which it is held sacrilege to slay.† Nanác, whose object was to conciliate the Muhammedans to his creed, prohibited hog's flesh also : but it was introduced by his successors, as much, perhaps, from a spirit of revenge against the Moslems, as from considerations of indulgence to the numerous converts of the Ját and Gujar tribe, among whom wild hog is a favourite species of food.

The Muhammedans, who become Sikhs, intermarry with each other, but are allowed to preserve none of their usages, being obliged to eat hog's flesh, and abstain from circumcision.

The Sikhs are forbid the use of tobacco,‡ but allowed to indulge in spirituous§ liquors, which they almost all drink to excess ; and it is rare to see a Singh soldier, after sunset, quite sober. Their drink is an ardent spirit,|| made in the Punjaúb ; but they have no

* A marriage took place very lately between the Sikh chief of Patialá and that of the Ját Rájá, of B'haratpúr.

† Their prejudice regarding the killing of cows is stronger, if possible, than that of the Hindús.

‡ The Khalása Sikhs, who follow Nánac, and reject Gúrá Góvind's institutions, make use of it.

§ Spirituous liquors, they say, are allowed by that verse in the Adi-Grant'h, which states, "Eat, and give unto others to eat. Drink, and give unto others to drink. Be glad, and make others glad." There is also an authority, quoted by the Sikhs, from the Hindú Sástras, in favour of this drinking to excess. Durgá, agreeably to the Sikh quotations used to drink, because liquor inspires courage ; and this goddess, they say, was drunk when she slew Mahishásur.

|| When Fateh Singh, of Aluwál, who was quite a young man, was with the British army, Lord Lake gratified him by a field review. He was upon an elephant, and I attended him upon another. A little be-

objections to either the wine or spirits of Europe, when they can obtain them.

The use of opium, to intoxicate, is very common with the Sikhs, as with most of the military tribes of India. They also take B'hang,* another inebriating drug.

The conduct of the Sikhs to their women differs in no material respect from that of the tribes of Hindús, or Muhammedans, from whom they are descended. Their moral character with regard to women, and indeed in most other points, may, from the freedom of their habits, generally be considered as much more lax than that of their ancestors, who lived under the restraint of severe restrictions, and whose fear of excommunication from their caste, at least obliged them to cover their sins with the veil of decency. This the emancipated Sikhs despise : and there is hardly an infamy which this debauched and dissolute race are not accused (and I believe with justice) of committing in the most open and shameful manner.

The Sikhs are almost all horsemen; and they take great delight in riding. Their horses were, a few years ago, famous ; and those bred in the Lak'hi Jungle, and other parts of their territory, were justly celebrated for their strength, temper, and activity : but the internal distractions of these territories has been unfavourable to the encouragement of the breed, which has consequently declined ; and the Sikhs now are in no respect better mounted than the Mahrátas. From a hundred of their cavalry it would be difficult to select ten horses that would be admitted as fit to mount native troopers in the English service.

fore sunset he became low and uneasy. I observed it ; and B'hág Singh an old chief, of frank, rough manners, at once said, " Fateh Singh wants his dram, but is ashamed to drink before you." I requested he would follow his custom, which he did, by drinking a large cup of spirits.

* *Cannabis sativa.*

Their horsemen use swords and spears, and most of them now carry matchlocks, though some still use the bow and arrow ; a species of arms, for excellence in the use of which their forefathers were celebrated, and which their descendants appear to abandon with great reluctance.

The education of the Sikhs renders them hardy, and capable of great fatigue ; and the condition of the society in which they live, affords constant exercise to that restless spirit of activity and enterprise which their religion has generated. Such a race cannot be epicures ; they appear, indeed, generally to despise luxury of diet, and pride themselves in their coarse fare. Their dress is also plain, not unlike that of the Hindús, equally light and divested of ornament. Some of the chiefs wear gold bangles ; but this is rare ; and the general characteristic of their dress and mode of living, is simplicity.

The principal leaders among the Sikhs affect to be familiar and easy of intercourse with their inferiors, and to despise the pomp and state of the Muhámmedan chiefs : but their pride often counteracts this disposition ; and they appeared to me to have, in proportion to their rank and consequence, more state, and to maintain equal, if not more, reserve and dignity with their followers, than is usual with the Mahráta chiefs.

It would be difficult, if not impracticable, to ascertain the amount of the population of the Sikh territories, or even to compute the number of the armies which they could bring into action. They boast that they can raise more than a hundred thousand horse : and, if it were possible to assemble every Sikh horseman, this statement might not be an exaggeration : but, there is, perhaps, no chief among them, except Runjeet Singh, of Lahore, that could bring an effective body of four thousand men into the field. The force of Runjeet Singh did not, in 1805, amount to eight

thousand; and part of that was under chiefs who had been subdued from a state of independence, and whose turbulent minds ill brooked an usurpation which they deemed subversive of the constitution of their commonwealth. His army is now more numerous than it was, but it is composed of materials which have no natural cohesion; and the first serious check which it meets, will probably cause its dissolution.

There is no branch of this sketch which is more curious and important, or that offers more difficulties to the enquirer, than the religion of the Sikhs. We meet with a creed of pure deism, grounded on the most sublime general truths, blended with the belief of all the absurdities of the Hindú mythology, and the fables of Muhammedanism; for Nánac professed a desire to reform, not to destroy, the religion of the tribe in which he was born; and, actuated by the great and benevolent design of reconciling the jarring faiths of Brahmá and Muhammed, he endeavoured to conciliate both Hindús and Moslems to his doctrine, by persuading them to reject those parts of their respective beliefs and usages, which, he contended, were unworthy of that God whom they both adored. He called upon the Hindús to abandon the worship of idols, and to return to that pure devotion of the Deity, in which their religion originated. He called upon the Muhammedans to abstain from practices, like the slaughter of cows, that were offensive to the religion of the Hindús and to cease from the persecution of that race. He adopted, in order to conciliate them, many of the maxims which he had learnt from mendicants, who professed the principles of the Súfi sect; and he constantly referred to the admired writings of the celebrated Muhammedan Kabír,* who was a professed Súfi, and

* This celebrated Súfi, or philosophical deist, lived in the time of the Emperor Shér Sháh. He was, by trade, a weaver; but has written several admired works. They are all composed in a strain of universal

who inculcated the doctrine of the equality of the relation of all created beings to their Creator. Nánac endeavoured, with all the power of his own genius, aided by such authorities, to impress both Hindús and Muhammedans with a love of toleration and an abhorrence of war; and his life was as peaceable as his doctrine. He appears, indeed, to have adopted, from the hour in which he abandoned his worldly occupations to that of his death, the habits practised by that crowd of holy mendicants, Sanyásis and Fakírs, with whom India swarms. He conformed to their customs; and his extraordinary austerities* are a constant theme of praise with his followers. His works are all in praise of God; but he treats the polytheism of the Hindús with respect, and even veneration. He never shows a disposition to destroy the fabric, but only wishes to divest it of its useless tinsel and false ornaments, and to establish its complete dependence upon the great Creator of the universe. He speaks every where of Muhammed, and his successors, with moderation; but animadverts boldly on what he conceives to be their errors; and, above all, on their endeavours to propagate their faith by the sword.

As Nánac made no material invasion of either the civil or religious usages of the Hindús, and as his only desire was to restore a nation who had degenerated from their original pure worship† into idolatry, he may be considered more in the light of a reformer than of a subverter of the Hindú religion; and those Sikhs

philanthropy and benevolence; and, above all, he inculcated religious toleration, particularly between the Muhammedans and Hindús, by both of whom his memory is held in the highest esteem and veneration.

* Nánac was celebrated for the manner in which he performed *Tapasa*, or austere devotion, which requires the mind to be so totally absorbed in the Divinity, as to be abstracted from every worldly thought, and this for as long a period as human strength is capable of sustaining.

† The most ancient Hindús do not appear to have paid adoration to idols; but, though they adored God, they worshipped the sun and elements.

who adhere to his tenets, without admitting those of Gúrú Góvind, are hardly to be distinguished from the great mass of Hindú population ; among whom there are many sects who differ, much more than that of Nánac, from the general and orthodox worship at present established in India.

The first successors of Nánac appear to have taught exactly the same doctrine as their leader ; and, though Har Góvind armed all his followers, it was on a principle of self-defence, in which he was fully justified, even by the usage of the Hindús. It was reserved for Gúrú Góvind to give a new character to the religion of his followers ; not by making any material alteration in the tenets of Nánac, but by establishing institutions and usages, which not only separated them from other Hindús, but which, by complete abolition of all distinction of castes, destroyed, at one blow, a system of civil polity, that, from being interwoven with the religion of a weak and bigoted race, fixed the rule of its priests upon a basis that had withstood the shock of ages. Though the code of the Hindús was calculated to preserve a vast community in tranquillity and obedience to its rulers, it had the natural effect of making the country in which it was established, an easy conquest to every powerful foreign invader ; and it appears to have been the contemplation of this effect that made Gúrú Góvind resolve on the abolition of caste, as a necessary and indispensable prelude to any attempt to arm the original native population of India against their foreign tyrants. He called upon all Hindús to break those chains in which prejudice and bigotry had bound them, and to devote themselves to arms, as the only means by which they could free themselves from the oppressive government of the Muhammedans ; against whom, a sense of his own wrongs, and those of his tribe, led him to preach eternal warfare. His religious doctrine was meant to be popular, and it

promised equality. The invidious appellations of Bráhmén, Cshatriya, Vaisya, and Súdra, were abolished. The pride of descent might remain, and keep up some distinctions ; but, in the religious code of Góvind, every Khálsa Singh (for such he termed his followers) was equal, and had a like title to the good things of this world, and to the blessings of a future life.

Though Gúrá Góvind mixes, even more than Nánac, the mythology of the Hindús with his own tenets ; though his desire to conciliate them, in opposition to the Muhammedans, against whom he always breathed war and destruction, led him to worship at Hindú sacred shrines ; and though the peculiar customs and dress among his followers are stated to have been adopted from veneration to the Hindu goddess of courage, Dúrga Bhavání ; yet it is impossible to reconcile the religion and usages, which Góvind has established, with the belief of the Hindús. It does not, like that of Nánac, question some favourite dogmas of the disciples of Brahmá, and attack that worship of idols, which few of these defend, except upon the ground of these figures, before which they bend, being symbolical representations of the attributes of an all-powerful Divinity ; but it proceeds at once to subvert the foundation of the whole system. Wherever the religion of Gúrá Góvind prevails, the institutions of Brahmá must fall. The admission of proselytes, the abolition of the distinctions of caste, the eating of all kinds of flesh, except that of cows, the form of religious worship, and the general devotion of all Singhs to arms, are ordinances altogether irreconcilable with Hindú mythology, and have rendered the religion of the Sikhs as obnoxious to the Bráhméns, and higher tribes of the Hindús, as it is popular with the lower orders of that numerous class of mankind.

After this rapid sketch of the general character of the religion of the Sikhs, I shall take a more detailed view of its origin, progress, tenets, and forms.

A Sikh author,* whom I have followed in several parts of this sketch, is very particular in stating the causes of the origin of the religion of Nánac : he describes the different Yugas, or ages of the world, stated in the Hindú mythology. The Cali Yug, which is the present, is that in which it was written that the human race would become completely depraved : “Discord,” says the author, speaking of the Cali Yug, “will rise in the world, sin prevail, and the universe become wicked ; caste will contend with caste ; and, like bamboos in friction, consume each other to embers. The Védas, or scriptures,” he adds, “will be held in disrepute, for they shall not be understood, and the darkness of ignorance will prevail every where.” Such is this author’s record of a divine prophecy regarding this degenerate age. He proceeds to state what has ensued ; “Every one followed his own path, and sects were separated ; some worshipped Chandra (the moon) ; some Śūrya (the Sun) ; some prayed to the earth, to the sky, and the air, and the water, and the fire, while others worshipped D’herma Rájá (the judge of the dead) ; and in the fallacy of the sects nothing was to be found but error. In short, pride prevailed in the world, and the four castes† established a system of ascetic devotion. From these, the ten sects of Sanyásis, and the twelve sects of Yógis, originated. The Jangam, the Śrívíra, and the Déva Digambar, entered into mutual contests. The Bráhmens divided into different classes ; and the Sastras, Védas, and Puránas,‡ contradicted each other. The six Dersans (philosophical sects) exhibited enmity, and the thirty-six Páshands (heterodox sects) arose, with hundreds of thousands of chimerical and magical (*tantra mantra*) sects : and thus, from one form, many good and many evil forms

* B’hai Gúrú Das B’halé.

† Bráhmen, Cshatriya, Vaisya, and Súdra.

‡ Different sacred books of the Hindús.

originated, and error prevailed in the Calí Yug, or age of general depravity."

The Sikh author pursues this account of the errors into which the Hindús fell, with a curious passage, regarding the origin and progress of the Muhammedan religion.

"The world," he writes, "went on with these numerous divisions, when Muhammed Yará* appeared, who gave origin to the seventy-two sects,† and widely disseminated discord and war. He established the Rózeh-o-Aíd (fast and festivals), and the Namáz (prayer), and made his practice of devotional acts prevalent in the world, with a multitude of distinctions, of Pír (saint), Paighamber (prophet), Ulemá (the order of priesthood), and Kitáb (the Koran). He demolished the temples, and on their ruins built the mosques, slaughtering cows and helpless persons, and spreading transgression far and wide, holding in hostility Cáfrs (infidels), Mulhids (idolaters), Irmenis (Armenians), Rumis (the Turks), and Zingis (Ethiopians). Thus vice greatly diffused itself in the universe."

"Then," this author adds, "there were two races in the world; the one Hindú, the other Muhammedan; and both were alike excited by pride, enmity, and avarice, to violence. The Hindús set their heart on Gangá and Benares; the Muhammedans on Mecca and the Cáaba: the Hindús clung to their mark on the forehead and brahminical string; the Moslemans to their circumcision: the one cried Rám (the name of an Avatár), the other Rahím (the merciful); one name, but two ways of pronouncing it; forgetting equally the Védas and the Korán: and through the deceptions of lust, avarice, the world, and Satan, they swerved

* Yár signifies *friend*; and one of the prophet's titles, among his followers, is Yar-i-Khudá, or the *Friend of God*.

† The Muhammedan religion is said to be divided into seventy-two sects.

equally from the true path: while Bráhmens and Moulavis destroyed each other by their quarrels, and the vicissitudes of life and death hung always suspended over their heads.

“When the world was in this distracted state, and vice prevailed,” says this writer, “the complaint of virtue, whose dominion was extinct, reached the throne of the Almighty, who created Nánac, to enlighten and improve a degenerate and corrupt age: and that holy man made God the Supreme known to all, giving the nectareous water that washed his feet to his disciples to drink. He restored to Virtue her strength, blended the four castes* into one, established one mode of salutation, changed the childish play of bending the head at the feet of idols, taught the worship of the true God, and reformed a depraved world.”

Nánac appears, by the account of this author, to have established his fame for sanctity by the usual modes of religious mendicants. He performed severe Tapasa,† living upon sand, swallow-wort, and sleeping on sharp pebbles; and, after attaining fame by this kind of penance, he commenced his travels, with the view of spreading his doctrine over the earth.

After Nánac had completed his terrestrial travels, he is supposed to have ascended to Suméru, where he saw the Sidd’his,‡ and all seated in a circle. These, from a knowledge of that eminence for which he was predestined, wished to make him assume the characteristic devotion of their sect, to which they thought he would be an ornament. While means were used to effect this purpose, a divine voice was heard to exclaim: “Nánac shall form his own sect, distinct

* There is no ground to conclude that castes were altogether abolished by Nánac; though his doctrines and writings had a tendency to equalize the Hindús, and unite all in the worship of one God.

† A kind of ascetic devotion, which has been before explained.

‡ The Sidd’his (saints) are the attendants of the gods. The name is most generally applied to those who wait on Ganésa.

from all the Yatis* and Sidd'his; and his name shall be joyful to the Cali Yug." After this, Nánac preached the adoration of the true God to the Hindús; and then went to instruct the Muhammedans, in their sacred temples at Mecca. When at that place, the holy men are said to have gathered round him, and demanded, Whether their faith, or that of the Hindús, was the best? "Without the practice of true piety, both," said Nánac, "are erroneous, and neither Hindús nor Moslems will be acceptable before the throne of God; for the faded tinge of scarlet, that has been soiled by water, will never return. You both deceive yourselves, pronouncing aloud Rám and Rahím, and the way of Satan prevails in the universe."

The courageous independence with which Nánac announced his religion to the Muhammedans, is a favourite topic with his biographers. He was one day abused, and even struck, as one of these relates, by a Moullah, for lying on the ground with his feet in the direction of the sacred temple of Mecca. "How darest thou, infidel!" said the offended Muhammedan priest, "turn thy feet towards the house of God!"—"Turn them, if you can," said the pious but indignant Nánac, "in a direction where the house of God is not."

Nánac did not deny the mission of Muhammed. "That prophet was sent," he said, "by God, to this world, to do good, and to disseminate the knowledge of one God through means of the Kóran; but he, acting on the principle of free-will, which all human beings exercise, introduced oppression, and cruelty, and the slaughter of cows,† for which he died.—I am now sent," he added, "from heaven, to publish unto mankind a book, which shall reduce all the names

* The name Yati is most usually applied to the priests of the Jainas; but it is also applicable to Sanyásis, and other penitents.

† Nánac appears on this, and every other occasion, to have preserved his attachment to this favourite dogma of the Hindús.

given unto God to one name, which is God ; and he who calls him by any other, shall fall into the path of the devil, and have his feet bound in the chains of wretchedness." "You have," said he to the Muhammedans, "despoiled the temples, and burnt the sacred Védas of the Hindús ; and you have dressed yourselves in dresses of blue, and you delight to have your praises sung from house to house : but I, who have seen all the world, tell you, that the Hindús equally hate you and your mosques. I am sent to reconcile your jarring faiths, and I implore you to read their scriptures, as well as your own : but reading is useless without obedience to the doctrine taught ; for God has said, no man shall be saved except he has performed good works. The Almighty will not ask to what tribe or persuasion he belongs. He will only ask, What has he done ? Therefore those violent and continued disputes, which subsist between the Hindús and Moslems, are as impious as they are unjust."

Such were the doctrines, according to his disciples, which Nánac taught to both Hindús and Muhammedans. He professed veneration and respect, but refused adoration to the founders of both their religions ; for which, as for those of all other tribes, he had great tolerance. "A hundred thousand of Muhammeds," said Nánac, "a million of Brahmás, Vishnus, and a hundred thousand Ramás, stand at the gate of the Most High. These all perish ; God alone is immortal. Yet men, who unite in the praise of God, are not ashamed of living in contention with each other ; which proves that the evil spirit has subdued all. He alone is a true Hindú whose heart is just ; and he only is a good Muhammedan whose life is pure."

Nánac is stated, by the Sikh author from whom the above account of his religion is taken, to have had an interview with the supreme God, which he thus describes : "One day Nánac heard a voice from above

exclaim, Nánac, approach!" He replied, "Oh God! what power have I to stand in thy presence?" The voice said, "Close thine eyes." Nánac shut his eyes, and advanced: he was told to look up: he did so, and heard the word *Wa!* or *well done*, pronounced five times; and then *Wa! Gúrí!*, or *well done teacher*. After this God said, "Nánac! I have sent thee into the world, in the Cali Yug (or depraved age;) go and bear my name." Nánac said, "Oh God! how can I bear the mighty burthen? If my age was extended to tens of millions of years, if I drank of immortality, and my eyes were formed of the sun and moon, and were never closed, still, oh God! I could not presume to take charge of thy wondrous name."—"I will be thy Gúru (teacher,)" said God, "and thou shalt be a Gúru to all mankind, and thy sect shall be great in the world; their word is Púrí Púrí. The word of the Bairági is Ram! Rám! that of the Sanyási, Om! Namá! Nárá-yen! and the word of the Yógís, Adés! Adés! and the salutation of the Muhammedans is Salám Alikam; and that of the Hidús, Rám! Ram! but the word of thy sect shall be Gúru, and I will forgive the crimes of thy disciples. The place of worship of the Bairágís is called Rámsála; that of the Yógís, Asan; that of the Sanyásís Mát; that of thy tribe shall be Dherma Sála. Thou must teach unto thy followers three lessons: the first, to worship my name; the second, charity; the third, ablution. They must not abandon the world, and they must do ill to no being; for into every being have I infused breath; and whatever I am, thou art, for betwixt us there is no difference. It is a blessing that thou art sent into the Cálí Yug." After this, "*Wa Gúru!* or *well done, teacher!*" was pronounced from the mouth of the most high Gúru or teacher (God,) and Nánac came to give light and freedom to the universe.

The above will give a sufficient view of the ideas

which the Sikhs entertain regarding the divine origin of their faith ; which, as first taught by Nánac, might justly be deemed the religion of peace.

“Put on armour,” says Nánac, “that will harm no one ; let thy coat of mail be that of understanding, and convert thy enemies to friends. Fight with valour, but with no weapon except the word of God.” All the principles which Nánac inculcated, were those of pure deism ; but moderated, in order to meet the deep-rooted usages of that portion of mankind which he wished to reclaim from error. Though he condemned the lives and habits of the Muhammedans, he approved of the Korán.* He admitted the truth of the ancient Védas, but contended that the Hindú religion had been corrupted, by the introduction of a plurality of gods, with the worship of images ; which led their minds astray from that great and eternal Being, to whom adoration should alone be paid. He, however, followed the forms of the Hindús, and adopted most of their doctrines, which did not interfere with his great and leading tenet. He admitted the claim to veneration, of the numerous catalogue of Hindu Dévas, and Dévatás, or inferior deities ; but he refused them adoration. He held it impious to slaughter the cow ; and he directed his votaries, as has been seen, to consider ablution as one of their primary religious duties.

Nánac, according to Punjáubi authors, admitted the Hindú doctrine of metempsychosis. He believed, that really good men would enjoy Paradise ; that those who had no claim to the name of good, but yet were not bad, would undergo another probation, by revisiting the world in the human form and that the bad would animate the bodies of animals, particularly dogs and cats ; but it appears, from the same authori-

* This fact is admitted by Sikh authors. It is, however, probable, that Nánac was but imperfectly acquainted with the doctrines of that volume.

ties, that Nánac was acquainted with the Muhammedan doctrine regarding the fall of man, and a future state ; and that he represented it to his followers as a system, in which God, by showing a heaven and a hell, had, in his great goodness, held out future rewards and punishments to man, whose will he had left free, to incite him to good actions, and deter him from bad. The principle of reward and punishment is so nearly the same in the Hindú and in the Muhammedan religion, that it was not difficult for Nánac to reconcile his followers upon this point : but in this, as in all others, he seems to have bent to the doctrine of Brahma. In all his writings, however, he borrowed indifferently from the Korán and the Hindú Sástras ; and his example was followed by his successors ; and quotations from the scriptures of the Hindús, and from the book of Muhammed, are indiscriminately introduced into all their sacred writings, to elucidate those points on which it was their object to reconcile these jarring religions.

With the exact mode in which Nánac instructed his followers to address their prayers to that supreme Being whom he taught them to adore, I am not acquainted. Their D'herma Sála, or temples of worship, are, in general, plain buildings. Images are, of course, banished. Their prescribed forms of prayer are, I believe, few and simple. Part of the writings of Nánac, which have since been incorporated with those of his successors, in the Adi Grant'h, are read, or rather recited, upon every solemn occasion. These are all in praise of the Deity, of religion, and of virtue ; and against impiety and immorality. The Adi Grant'h, the whole of the first part of which is ascribed to Nánac, is written, like the rest of the books of the Sikhs, in the Gúrumuk'h* character. I can only

* A modified species of the Nágari character.

judge very imperfectly of the value of this work : but some extracts, translated from it, appear worthy of that admiration which is bestowed upon it by the Sikhs.

The *Adi-Grant'h* is in verse ; and many of the chapters, written by *Nánac*, are termed *Pídi*, which means, literally, a ladder or flight of steps ; and, metaphorically, that by which a man ascends.

In the following fragment, literally translated from the *Sódar rág ásá mahilla pehla* of *Nánac*, he displays the supremacy of the true God, and the inferiority of the *Dévatás*, and other created beings, to the universal Creator ; however they may have been elevated into deities by ignorance or superstition :

Thy portals, how wonderful they are, how wonderful thy palace,
where thou sittest and governeest all !

Numberless and infinite are the sounds which proclaim thy praises.

How numerous are thy *Peris*, skilful in music and song !

Pavan (air,) water, and *Vasantar* (fire,) celebrate thee ; *D'herma Rájá*
(the *Hindú Rhadamant'hus*) celebrates thy praises, at thy gates.

Chitrágupta (Secretary to *D'herma Rájá*) celebrates thy praises ;
who, skilful in writing, writes and administers final justice.

Iswara, *Brahma*, and *Dévi*, celebrate thy praises ; they declare in fit
terms thy majesty, at thy gates.

Indra celebrates thy praises, sitting on the *Indraic* throne amid the
Dévatás.

The just celebrate thy praises in profound meditation ; the pious de-
clare thy glory.

The *Yatís* and the *Satís* joyfully celebrate thy might.

The *Pandits*, skilled in reading, and the *Rishísvaras*, who, age by
age, read the *Védas*, recite thy praises.

The *Móhinís* (celestial courtezans,) heart alluring, inhabiting *Swar-
ga*, *Mritya*, and *Pátálá*, celebrate thy praises.

The *Ratnas* (gems,) with the thirty-eight *Tírt'has* (sacred springs,)
celebrate thy praises.

Heroes of great might celebrate thy name ; beings of the four kinds
of production celebrate thy praises.

The continents, and regions of the world, celebrate thy praises ; the
universal *Brahmánda* (the mundane egg,) which thou hast estab-
lished firm.

All who know thee praise thee, all who are desirous of thy worship.

How numerous they are who praise thee ! they exceed my compre-
hension : how, then, shall *Nánac* describe them ?

He, even he, is the Lord of truth, true, and truly just.

He is, he was, he passes, he passes not, the preserver of all that is
preserved.

Of numerous hues, sorts and kinds, he is the original author of Máyá (deception.)

Having formed the creation, he surveys his own work, the display of his own greatness.

What pleases him he does, and no order of any other being can reach him.

He is the Pádsháh and the Pádsáheb of Sháhs; Nánac resides in his favour.

These few verses are, perhaps, sufficient to show, that it was on a principle of pure deism that Nánac entirely grounded his religion. It was not possible, however, that the minds of any large portion of mankind could remain long fixed in a belief which presented them only with general truths, and those of a nature too vast for their contemplation or comprehension. The followers of Nánac, since his death, have paid an adoration to his name, which is at variance with the lessons which he taught; they have clothed him in all the attributes of a saint: they consider him as the selected instrument of God to make known the true faith to fallen man; and, as such, they give him divine honours; not only performing pilgrimage to his tomb, but addressing him, in their prayers, as their saviour and mediator.

The religious tenets and usages of the Sikhs continued, as they had been established by Nánac,* till the time of Gúrá Góvind; who, though he did not alter the fundamental principles of the established faith, made so complete a change in the sacred usages and civil habits of his followers, that he gave them an entirely new character: and though the Sikhs retain all their veneration for Nánac, they deem Gúrá Góvind to have been equally exalted, by the immediate

* Certainly no material alteration was made, either in the belief or forms of the Sikhs, by any of his successors before Gúrá Góvind. Har Góvind, who armed his followers to repel aggression, would only appear to have made a temporary effort to oppose his enemies, without an endeavour to effect any serious change in the religious belief or customs of the sect to which he belonged.

favour and protection of the Divinity ; and the Dásama Pádsháh ka Gran'th, or book of the tenth king, which was written by Gúru Góvind, is considered, in every respect, as holy as the Adí Grant'h of Nánac, and his immediate successors. I cannot better explain the pretensions which Gúru Góvind has made to the rank of a prophet, than by exhibiting his own account of his mission in a literal version from his Vichitra Nátac.

“ I now declare my own history, and the multifarious austerities which I have performed.

“ Where the seven peaks rise beautiful on the mountain Hémacutta, and the place takes the name of Sap-ta Sringa, greater penance have I performed than was ever endured by Pándu Rájá, meditating constantly on Mahá Cál and Cálica, till diversity was changed into one form. My father and mother meditated on the Divinity, and performed the Yóga, till Gúru Déva approved of their devotions. Then the Supreme issued his order, and I was born, in the Calí Yug, though my inclination was not to come into the world, my mind being fixed on the foot of the Supreme. When the supreme Being made known his will, I was sent into the world. The eternal Being thus addressed this feeble insect :

“ “ —I have manifested thee as my own son, and appointed thee to establish a perfect Pant'h (sect). Go into the world, establish virtue and expel vice.’—

“ —I stand with joined hands, bending my head at thy word : the Pant'h shall prevail in the world, when thou lendest thine aid.—Then was I sent into the world : thus I received mortal birth. As the Supreme spoke to me, so do I speak, and to none do I bear enmity. Whoever shall call me Paraméswara, he shall sink into the pit of hell : know, that I am only the servant of the Supreme, and concerning this entertain no doubt. As God spoke, I announce unto the world, and remain not silent in the world of men.

“As God spoke, so do I declare, and I regard no person’s word. I wear my dress in nobody’s fashion, but follow that appointed by the Supreme. I perform no worship to stones, nor imitate the ceremonies of any one. I pronounce the infinite name, and have attained to the Supreme Being. I wear no bristling locks on my head, nor adorn myself with ear-rings. I receive no person’s words in my ears ; but as the Lord speaks, I act. I meditate on the sole name, and attain my object. To no other do I perform the Jáp, in no other do I confide : I meditate on the infinite name, and attain the supreme light. On no other do I meditate ; the name of no other do I pronounce.

“For this sole reason, to establish virtue, was I sent into the world by Gúru Déva. ‘Every where,’ said he, ‘establish virtue, and exterminate the wicked and vicious.’ For this purpose have I received mortal birth ; and this let all the virtuous understand. To establish virtue, to exalt piety, and to extirpate the vicious utterly. Every former Avatár established his own Jáp ; but no one punished the irreligious, no one established both the principles and practice of virtue, (Dherm Carm.) Every holy man (Ghóus,) and prophet (Ambia,) attempted only to establish his own reputation in the world ; but no one comprehended the supreme Being, or understood the true principles or practice of virtue. The doctrine of no other is of any avail : this doctrine fix in your minds. There is no benefit in any other doctrine, this fix in your minds.

“Whoever reads the Korán, whoever reads the Purán, neither of them shall escape death, and nothing but virtue shall avail at last. Millions of men may read the Korán, they may read innumerable Puráns ; but it shall be of no avail in the life to come, and the power of destiny shall prevail over them.”

Gúru Góvind, after this account of the origin of his

mission, gives a short account of his birth and succession to the spiritual duties at his father's death.

“ At the command of God I received mortal birth, and came into the world. This I now declare briefly ; attend to what I speak.

“ My father journeyed towards the East, performing ablution in all the sacred springs. When he arrived at Triveni, he spent a day in acts of devotion and charity. On that occasion was I manifested. In the town of Patna I received a body. Then the Madra Des received me, and nurses nursed me tenderly, and tended me with great care, instructing me attentively every day. When I reached the age of Dherm and Carm (principles and practice), my father departed to the Déva Lóca. When I was invested with the dignity of Rája, I established virtue to the utmost of my power. I addicted myself to every species of hunting in the forests, and daily killed the bear and the stag. When I had become acquainted with that country, I proceeded to the city of Pávata, where I amused myself on the banks of the Calindri, and viewed every kind of spectacle. There I slew a great number of tigers ; and, in various modes, hunted the bear.”

The above passages will convey an idea of that impression which Gúrú Góvind gave his followers of his divine mission. I shall shortly enumerate those alterations he made in the usages of the Sikhs, whom it was his object to render, through the means of religious enthusiasm, a warlike race.

Though Gúrú Góvind was brought up in the religion of Nánac, he appears, from having been educated among the Hindú priests of Mathura, to have been deeply tainted with their superstitious belief ; and he was, perhaps, induced by considerations of policy, to lean still more strongly to their prejudices, in order to induce them to become converts to that religious military community, by means of which it was his object to destroy the Muhammedan power.

The principal of the religious institutions of Gúrú Góvind, is that of the Páhal,—the ceremony by which a convert is initiated into the tribe of Sikhs ; or, more properly speaking, that of Singhs. The meaning of this institution is to make the convert a member of the Khálsa, or Sikh commonwealth, which he can only become by assenting to certain observances ; the devoting himself to arms for the defence of the commonwealth, and the destruction of its enemies ; the wearing his hair, and putting on a blue dress.*

The mode in which Gúrú Góvind first initiated his converts, is described by a Sikh writer ; and, as I believe it is nearly the same as that now observed, I shall shortly state it as he has described it. Gúrú Góvind he says, after his arrival at Mak'haval, initiated five converts, and gave them instructions how to initiate others. The mode is as follows : The convert is told that he must allow his hair to grow. He must clothe himself from head to foot in blue clothes. He is then presented with the five weapons : a sword, a firelock, a bow and arrow, and a pike†. One of those who in-

* It has been before stated, that all the followers of Góvind do not now wear the blue dress, but they all wear their hair ; and their jealous regard of it is not to be described. Three inferior agents of Sikh chiefs were one day in my tent ; one of them was a Khálsa Singh, and the two others of the Khalása tribes of Sikhs. I was laughing and joking with the Khálsa Singh, who said he had been ordered to attend me to Calcutta. Among other subjects of our mirth, I rallied him on trusting himself so much in my power. "Why, what is the worst," said he, "that you can do to me, when I am at such a distance from home ?" I passed my hand across my chin, imitating the act of shaving. The man's face was in an instant distorted with rage, and his sword half drawn. "You are ignorant," said he to me, "of the offence you have given. I cannot strike you, who are above me, and the friend of my master and the state. But no power," he added, "shall save these fellows," alluding to the two Khalása Sikhs, "from my revenge, for having dared to smile at your action." It was with the greatest difficulty and only by the good offices of some Sikh chiefs, that I was able to pacify the wounded honour of this Singh.

† The goddess of courage, Bhavani Durgá, represented in the Dasama Pádsháh ka Grant'h, or book of kings of Gúrú Góvind as the soul of arms, or tutelary goddess of war, and is thus addressed : "Thou art the edge of the sword, thou art the arrow, the sword, the knife, and the dagger."

itiate him then says, "The Gúru is thy holy teacher, and thou art his Sikh or disciple." Some sugar and water is put into a cup, and stirred round with a steel knife, or dagger, and some of the first chapters of the Adí-Grant'h, and the first chapters of the Dasama Pádsháh ka Grant'h, are read; and those who perform the initiation exclaim, *Wa ! Gúruji ka Khálsa ! Wa ! Gúruji kí Fateh !* (Success to the state of the Gúru ! Victory attend the Gúru !) After this exclamation has been repeated five times, they say, "This sherbet is nectar. It is the water of life; drink it." The disciple obeys; and some sherbet, prepared in a similar manner, is sprinkled over his head and beard. After these ceremonies, the disciple is asked if he consents to be of the faith of Gúru Góvind. He answers, "I do consent." He is then told, "If you do, you must abandon all intercourse, and neither eat, drink, nor sit in company with men of five sects which I shall name. The first, the Mína D'hírmal; who, though of the race of Nánac, were tempted by avarice to give poison to Arjun; and, though they did not succeed, they ought to be expelled from society. The second are the Musandiá; a sect who call themselves Gúrús, or priests, and endeavour to introduce heterodox doctrines.* The third, Rám Ráyí, the descendants of Rám Ráy, whose intrigues were the great cause of the destruction of the holy ruler, Tégh Singh. The fourth are the Kud-i-már, or destroyers† of their own daughters. Fifth, the Bhadaní, who shave the hair of their head and beards." The disciple, after this warning against intercourse with sectaries, or rather schismatics, is instructed in some general precepts, the observance of which regard the welfare of the community into which he has entered. He is told to be gentle and polite to all with whom he

* Gúru Góvind put to death many of this tribe.

† This barbarous custom still prevails among the Rájapúts in many parts of Hindústan.

converses, to endeavour to attain wisdom, and to emulate the persuasive eloquence of Baba Nánac. He is particularly enjoined, whenever he approaches any of the Sikh temples, to do it with reverence and respect, and to go to Umritsir, to pay his devotions to the Khálsa, or state; the interests of which he is directed, on all occasions, to consider paramount to his own. He is instructed to labor to increase the prosperity of the town of Umritsir; and told, that at every place of worship which he visits he will be conducted in the right path by the Gúru (Gúru Góvind). He is instructed to believe, that it is the duty of all those who belong to the Khálsa, or commonwealth of the Sikhs, neither to lament the sacrifice of property, nor of life, in support of each other; and he is directed to read the Adí-Grant'h and Dasama Pádsháh ka Grant'h every morning and every evening. Whatever he has received from God, he is told it is his duty to share with others. And after the disciple has heard and understood all these and similar precepts, he is declared to be duly initiated.

Gúru Góvind Singh, agreeably to this Sikh author, after initiating the first five disciples in the mode above stated, ordered the principal persons among them* to initiate him exactly on similar occasions, which he did. The author from whom the above account is taken, states, that when Góvind was at the point of death, he exclaimed, "Wherever five Sikhs are assembled, there I also shall be present!" and, in consequence of this expression, five Sikhs are the number necessary to make a Singh, or convert. By the religious institutions of Gúru Góvind, proselytes are admitted from all tribes and castes in the universe. The initiation

* Agreeably to this author, Gúru Góvind was initiated on Friday the 8th of the month B'hádra, in the year 1753 of the æra of Vicramáditya; and on that day his great work, the Dasama Pádsháh ka Grant'h, or book of the tenth king, was completed.

may take place at any time of life, but the children of the Singhs all go through this rite at a very early age.

The leading tenet of Gúrú Góvind's religious institutions, which obliges his followers to devote themselves to arms, is stated, in one of the chapters of the Dasama Pádsháh ka Grant'h, or book of the tenth king, written in praise of Dúrga B'haváni, the goddess of courage: "Dúrga," Gúrú Góvind says, "appeared to me when I was asleep, arrayed in all her glory. The goddess put into my hand the hilt of a bright scimitar, which she had before held in her own. 'The country of the Muhammedans,' said the goddess, 'shall be conquered by thee, and numbers of that race shall be slain.' After I had heard this, I exclaimed, 'This steel shall be the guard to me and my followers, because, in its lustre, the splendour of thy countenance, O goddess! is always reflected.'*"

The Dasama Pádsháh ka Grant'h of Gúrú Góvind appears, from the extracts which I have seen of it, to abound in fine passages. Its author has borrowed largely from the Sástras of the Brahméns, and the Korán. He praises Nánac as a holy saint, accepted of God; and grounds his faith, like that of his predecessors, upon the adoration of one God; whose power and attributes he however describes by so many Sanscrit names, and with such constant allusions to the Hindú mythology, that it appears often difficult to separate his purer belief from their gross idolatry. He, however, rejects all worship of images, on an opinion taken from one of the ancient Védas, which declares, "that to worship an idol made of wood,

* An author, whom I have often quoted, says, Gúrú Góvind, gave the following injunctions to his followers: "It is right to slay a Muhammedan wherever you meet him. If you meet a Hindú, beat him and plunder him, and divide his property among you. Employ your constant effort to destroy the countries ruled by Muhammedans. If they oppose you, defeat and slay them."

earth, or stone, is as foolish as it is impious ; for God alone is deserving of adoration."

The great points, however, by which Gúrú Góvind has separated his followers for ever from the Hindús, are those which have been before stated ;—the destruction of the distinction of castes, the admission of proselytes, and the rendering the pursuit of arms not only admissible, but the religious duty of all his followers. Whereas, among the Hindús, agreeable to the Dherma Sástra, (one of the most revered of their sacred writings,) carrying arms on all occasions, as an occupation, is only lawful to the Cshatriya or military tribe. A Bráhmen is allowed to obtain a livelihood by arms, if he can by no other mode. The Vaisya and Súdra are not allowed to make arms their profession, though they may use them in self-defence.

X The sacred book of Gúrú Góvind is not confined to religious subjects, or tales of Hindú mythology, related in his own way ; but abounds in accounts of the battles which he fought, and of the actions which were performed by the most valiant of his followers. Courage is, throughout this work; placed above every other virtue ; and Góvind, like Muhammed, makes martyrdom for the faith which he taught, the shortest and most certain road to honour in this world, and eternal happiness in the future. The opinion which the Sikhs entertain of Góvind will be best collected from their most esteemed authors.

"Gúrú Góvind Singh," one* of those writers states, "appeared as the tenth Avatár. He meditated on the Creator himself, invisible, eternal, and incomprehensible. He established the Khálsa, his own sect, and, by exhibiting singular energy, leaving the hair on his head, and seizing the scimitar, he smote every wicked person. He bound the garment of chastity round his

* B'hai Gúrú Dás Bhalé.

loins, grasped the sword of valour, and, passing the true word of victory, became victorious in the field of combat ; and seizing the Dévatás, his foes, he inflicted on them punishment ; and, with great success, diffused the sublime Gúru Jáp (a mystical form of prayer composed by Gúru Góvind) through the world. As he was born a warlike Singh, he assumed the blue dress ; and, by destroying the wicked Turks, he exalted the name of Hari (God.) No Sirdar could stand in battle against him, but all of them fled ; and, whether Hindú Rájás, or Muhammedan lords, became like dust in his presence. The mountains, hearing of him, were struck with terror ; the whole world was affrighted, and the people fled from their habitations. In short, such was his fame, that they were all thrown into consternation, and began to say, ‘ Besides thee, O Sat Gúru ! there is no dispeller of danger.’—Having seized and displayed his sword, no person could resist his might.”

The same author, in a subsequent passage, gives a very characteristic account of that spirit of hostility which the religion of Gúru Góvind breathed against the Muhammedans ; and of the manner in which it treated those sacred writings, upon which most of the established usages of Hindús are grounded.

“ By the command of the Eternal, the great Gúru disseminated the true knowledge. Full of strength and courage, he successfully established the Khálsa (or state). Thus, at once founding the sect of Singh, he struck the whole world with awe : overturning temples and sacred places, tombs and mosques, he levelled them all with the plain : rejecting the Védas, the Puráns, the six Sástras, and the Korán ; he abolished the cry of Namaz (Muhammedan prayer), and slew the Sultans ; reducing the Mírs and Pírs (the lords and priests of the Muhammedans) to silence, he overturned all their sects ; the Moullahs (professors), and

the Kázis (judges), were confounded, and found no benefit from their studies. The Bráhmens, the Pandits, and the Jótishis (or astrologers), had acquired a relish for worldly things : they worshipped stones and temples, and forgot the Supreme. Thus these two sects, the Muhammedan and Hindú remained involved in delusion and ignorance, when the third sect of the Khálsa originated in purity. When, at the order of Gúru Góvind the Singhs seized and displayed the scimitar, then subduing all their enemies, they meditated on the Eternal ; and, as soon as the order of the Most High was manifested in the world, circumcision ceased, and the Turks trembled, when they saw the ritual of Muhammed destroyed : then the Nakára (large drum) of victory sounded throughout the world, and fear and dread were abolished. Thus the third sect was established, and increased greatly in might."

These extracts, and what I have before stated, will sufficiently show the character of the religious institutions of Gúru Góvind ; which were admirably calculated to awaken, through the means of fanaticism, a spirit of courage and independence, among men who had been content, for ages, with that degraded condition in society, to which they were taught to believe themselves born. The end which Góvind sought, could not, perhaps, have been attained by the employment of other means. Exhortations respecting their civil rights, and the wrongs which they sustained, would have been wasted on minds enslaved by superstition, and who could only be persuaded to assert themselves men, by an impression that it was the will of Heaven they should do so. His success is a strong elucidation of the general character of the Hindú natives of India. That race, though in general mild and peaceable, take the most savage and ferocious turn, when roused to action by the influence of religious feeling.

I have mentioned, in the narrative part of this sketch, the attempt of the Bairágí Banda to alter the religious institutions of Gúru Góvind, and its failure. The tribe of Acálís (immortals), who have now assumed a dictatorial sway in all the religious ceremonies at Umritsir, and the Nirmala and Shahid, who read the sacred writings, may hereafter introduce some changes in those usages which the Sikhs revere: but it is probable that the spirit of equality, which has been hitherto considered as the vital principle of the Khálsa or commonwealth, and which makes all Sikhs so reluctant to own either a temporal or spiritual leader, will tend greatly to preserve their institutions from invasion: and it is stated, in a tradition which is universally believed by the Sikhs, and has, indeed, been inserted in their sacred writings, that Gúru Góvind, when he was asked by his followers, who surrounded his death-bed, to whom he would leave his authority? replied, "I have delivered over the Khálsa (commonwealth) to God, who never dies. I have been your guide, and will still preserve you; read the Gránt'h, and attend to its tenets; and whoever remains true to the state, him will I aid." From these dying words of Gúru Góvind, the Sikhs believe themselves to have been placed, by their last and most revered prophet, under the peculiar care of God: and their attachment to this mysterious principle, leads them to consider the Khálsa (or commonwealth) as a theocracy; and such an impression is likely to oppose a very serious obstacle, if not an insuperable barrier, to the designs of any of their chiefs, who may hereafter endeavour to establish an absolute power over the whole nation.—*Malcolm's Sketches of the Sikhs.*

CHAPTER VI.

HISTORY OF THE PUNJAUB UNDER RUNJEET SINGH.

RUNJEET SINGH was born on the 2nd November, 1780; his father, Maha Singh, was an active and enterprising chief, who acquired great reputation by early feats in arms, so much so, that many independent Sirdars attached themselves to him, and chose to follow his standard in war, and live under his countenance and protection. The continual success which attended his undertakings, together with the connections he formed, soon gave him such an ascendancy, that none of the Sikh chiefs could compete with him in authority. The result of his superiority was favorable to the country, and the Punjaub enjoyed a repose and tranquillity to which it had long been a stranger.

Maha Singh died in 1792, at the early age of twenty-seven, leaving a high character for bravery, activity, and prudence, and was succeeded by his only son Runjeet, then twelve years old. Little care had been bestowed on the education of the young Rajah, whose early years were spent in following the sports of the field, and who had never been taught to read or write in any language. On attaining the age of seventeen, Runjeet, as his father had done before him, dismissed the Deewan, and assumed the conduct of affairs. In the course of the years 1795-96-97 the Punjaub was twice exposed to invasion by Shah Zemaun, who had recently

succeeded to the throne of Cabool. In 1798 the Shah advanced again, but finding it impossible to make any provision for the permanent occupation of the country, he retraced his steps to his hereditary dominions, and the Sikh Sirdars returned to the territories which they had evacuated at the Shah's approach. On the Shah's retirement, Runjeet began to entertain the design of obtaining Lahore for himself, and by an opportune service rendered to that prince, he obtained from him a grant of the place, with permission to take possession of it.

He accomplished this object by skilful management rather than by force, and the city remained ever after in his hands. In the course of the next three or four years, his continual encroachments excited the fears and jealousy of all the Sirdars who had hitherto enjoyed independence; they perceived that it was the aim of Runjeet to reduce them to fealty and submission, yet so great were their jealousies and dissensions, that they could devise or attempt nothing to relieve themselves from his arbitrary exactions, and the forfeitures and resumptions with which he systematically visited the family of every chief that died.

About this time the deposition of the sons of Timoor* began to produce such distractions in the Affghan empire, that the royal authority was soon reduced to a very low ebb. Runjeet was encouraged by this state of things to direct his views westward, and in 1804 he determined to seize upon the dependencies of that empire east of the Indus. He accordingly crossed the Ravee, but at his approach several chiefs purchased security from violence and plunder by submission and presents. Relations were then established with many Mussulman families, and the chiefs as far as the Indus,

* Humayoon, Mahmood, Shah Zemaun, and Shah Shooja, the latter of whom had been seated by British influence on the throne of Cabool.

beginning to see to what quarter their hopes and fears must for the future be directed, at once submitted to the ruler of Lahore, and withdrew from all further connection with the court of Cabool.

Runjeet Singh continued steadily to pursue his career of occupations and usurpations on the eastern and southern banks of the Sutlej, and his authority in the Punjaub was so completely established, that it became essential to the policy of the British Government in India to enter into amicable relations with his court, and to accomplish this purpose, in the year 1808, Mr. Metcalfe* was despatched to Lahore. He was received with the usual attentions, but the conduct of Runjeet was so unsatisfactory, and he evinced such a strong disposition to continue his encroachments, that it was deemed expedient to advance a body of troops under Colonel Ochterlony, to enforce the demands, and support the negociation of our agent.

Runjeet soon became sensible that it would be better policy to conciliate our friendship than to provoke our enmity, and on the 25th of April, 1809, a treaty of mutual peace and friendship was concluded at Umritsir; having at length satisfied himself that the apprehensions he entertained of the designs of the Government of Calcutta were unfounded, and that the ulterior views for which he gave us credit, had no existence, he acquiesced in the connection with a zeal and cordiality which suffered no interruption during the remainder of his life. It was about this time that Runjeet commenced the formation of battalions of troops on the British model, influenced probably in great measure by the efficiency and discipline of the British Sepoys who were with Mr. Metcalfe, and of which he had himself had an opportunity of witnessing a very striking example.

* Now Lord Charles Metcalfe, the late Governor of Jamaica.

In February, 1810, in the midst of operations which he was carrying on to enforce the resumption of the territorial possessions of a chief who had lately died,* news was brought him that Shah Shooja was approaching to seek refuge in his dominions, where, though received with much respect, he made at that time a very short stay. His departure left the Maharajah at liberty to pursue an enterprise against Mooltan, from which, however, he was compelled to retire, greatly exasperated at his ill success. Of the twelve original Missuls, none now remained in the Punjaub but that of Runjeet himself, and three others, all closely associated with him, and ranged under his standard; and his conduct appears to have been systematically regulated by a determination to level to a condition of vassalage every one who was in a position to assert his independence, or who was in the enjoyment of a patrimony won by his ancestors' valor.

In the beginning of 1812, the marriage of the heir-apparent, Khuruk Singh, was celebrated with great pomp at the court of Lahore, on which occasion an invitation was sent to Colonel Ochterlony to honor the ceremony with his presence. The distinction and confidence shown to that officer, presenting a marked contrast with the suspicious mistrust which Mr. Metcalfe had formerly experienced, afforded a satisfactory proof of the change which had taken place in the sentiments of the Maharajah towards the British Government.

In March, 1813, Shah Shooja again came to Lahore, his wife (who was already there,) having assured her husband that he would find a friend in the ruler of the Punjaub. But he had no sooner arrived, than a demand was made upon him to surrender the "Koh-i-

* Jodh Singh of Vuzeerabad.

noor," or mountain of light, 'a Jaghire being promised as the price of his compliance. The eagerness of the Sikh to obtain, and the reluctance of the Affghan to resign, this celebrated jewel,* (alike renowned for its magnitude and its migrations,) appear to have been of equal intensity, but not so the power of the contending parties. The character of Runjeet, more unscrupulous than cruel, was curiously displayed in the measures he adopted to possess himself of this highly coveted prize.

No greater severity was employed, than appeared absolutely necessary to vanquish the obstinacy of the Shah, and none was omitted which promised the accomplishment of that end. The exiled family was deprived of all nourishment during two days, but when their firmness was found proof against hunger, food was supplied. It was in vain that the Shah denied that the diamond was in his possession, and having exhausted remonstrance, resorted to artifice and delay.

Runjeet was neither to be deceived, nor diverted from his purpose, and at length Shah Shooja, wearied out by importunity and severity, and seeing that nothing else would satisfy the rapacity of Runjeet, agreed to give up the jewel. Accordingly on the 1st June, 1813, the Maharajah waited on the Shah for the purpose of the surrender.

He was received with great dignity by the prince, and both being seated, there was a solemn silence which lasted nearly an hour. Runjeet then grew impatient, and whispered an attendant to remind the Shah of the object of the meeting. No answer was returned, but the Shah made a signal with his eyes to an eunuch, who retired, and brought in a small

* This diamond, which is said to be an inch and a half in length, and an inch wide, adorned the peacock throne at Delhi;—it was carried off by Nadir Shah, after whose death, it was seized in the plunder of Nadir's tents by Ahmed Shah, from whom it descended to his son, Shah Shooja.

roll, which he placed on the carpet at equal distances between the two chiefs. Runjeet ordered the roll to be unfolded, when the diamond was exhibited to his sight. He recognised, seized it, and immediately retired.

The Shah some time afterwards purchased his release by a payment of 20,000 rupees. He was not yet, however, out of the power of his oppressor, and not long after, Runjeet being apprised that he had still left some rare and valuable jewels, he seized the most precious of them for his own use, together with all the other costly articles on which he could lay his hands. After suffering various hardships and indignities, Shah Shooja contrived to make his escape, and after some further adventures and misfortunes, placed himself under the protection of the British Government, by whom a moderate provision was assigned for his maintenance, and in this asylum he remained until recent events caused a revolution in his favour, and seated him beyond all expectation on the throne of Cabool.*

It would greatly exceed the purpose for which this sketch was undertaken, to enter into minute details of the various military operations of the Maharajah, and of the territorial acquisitions which were their results. In his first expedition against Cashmeer, he was defeated with some loss, and compelled to retreat; this reverse, however, was soon repaired, and in the follow-

* It must be satisfactory to the lovers of legitimacy, to know, that Shah Shooja is the rightful king of Cabool, and that his defeated competitor, Dost Mahomed, was not only an usurper, but has not even any blood-royal in his veins. He was one of the numerous and powerful fraternity of Affghan chiefs, called the Barikzye brothers, by whom the sons of Timoor were dispossessed, and among whom the Affghan kingdom was divided. After much disagreement and hostility among themselves, Dost Mahomed became the head of his family, and of the Affghan confederacy, and since the year 1823, he has been established in the virtual sovereignty of Cabool; though the legitimate right of sovereignty is vested, not in the Barikzye, but in the Suddoozye clan or family, of which Shah Shooja, the present king, is the head.

ing year the Sikh army was again in the field, ravaging, plundering, and confiscating the possessions of their neighbours. The beginning of the year 1818, was signalised by the occupation of the province of Mooltan, and the end of it by the capture of Peshawur. Early in 1819, Runjeet prepared for a second expedition against Cashmeer; in April, the Sikh army advanced to the frontier, routed the forces of Cashmeer on the 5th of July, and the conquest of that province was effected without further resistance.

The same course of petty warfare, systematic aggression, and almost constant success, was continued for the next ten or twelve years. The desire of the Maharajah to maintain and improve his amicable relations with our Government, led to an interchange of compliments and presents with the British governors and commanders as often as occasions presented themselves; and on the 20th October, 1831, a meeting was arranged between Lord William Bentinck, then Governor-General of India, and the Lahore chief; and though some difficulties were at first started on the score of etiquette, these were all waived by Runjeet with a liberality indicative of the practical good sense which was his peculiar characteristic.

The interview was conducted with all the pomp and magnificence suitable to the dignity of the ruler of British India, and to the wealth and importance of the sovereign of the Punjaub; but the details of it were little if at all different from those which have been described in the more recent meeting between Lord Auckland and the Maharajah.

A tolerably correct notion of the character of Runjeet Singh may be gathered from this sketch:—Brought up, but not educated, in the idleness and debauchery of a Zenana, by the pernicious influence of which, it is marvellous that the stoutest mind should not be emasculated, and the acutest faculties not be irretriev-

ably blunted, he appears from the moment he assumed the reins of government to have evinced a vigour of understanding, on which his habitual excesses, prematurely fatal as they proved to his bodily powers, produced no sensible effect.

His was one of that order of minds which seem destined by nature to win their way to distinction, and achieve greatness. His courage was of that cool and calculating sort, which courted no unnecessary danger, and shunned none which his purposes made it expedient to encounter; and he always observed a just proportion between his efforts and his objects. Gifted with an intuitive perception of character, and a comprehensive knowledge of human nature, it was by the overruling influence of a superior mind, that he contrived gradually, almost insensibly, and with little resistance, not only to reduce the proud and high-spirited chiefs of his nation to the condition of subjects, but to render them the devoted adherents of his person, and the firm supporters of his throne.

With an accurate and retentive memory, and with great fertility both of invention and resource, he was an excellent man of business, without being able to write or even to read. As insensible to remorse and pity as indisposed to cruelty and the shedding of blood, he cared neither for the happiness or the lives of others, except as far as either might be concerned in the obstruction or advancement of his projects, from the steady pursuit of which no consideration ever diverted him. His success, and especially the consolidation of his power, are in great measure attributable to the soundness of his views, and the practicable nature of his plans. He never exhausted his strength in wild and hazardous enterprises, but, restraining his ambition within the limits of a reasonable probability, they were not only so well-timed and skilfully arranged as generally to ensure success, but failure, (in the rare in-

stances when they did fail,) never seriously shook his stability, or impaired his resources.

He seems to have had a lively, fanciful, and ingenious mind, but the ceremonious forms of Indian etiquette, and the figurative and hyperbolical style of Oriental intercourse, are not favourable to the development of social qualities. Runjeet, however, had a natural shrewdness, sprightliness and vivacity, worthy of a more civilized and intellectual state. He was a devout believer in the doctrines, and a punctual observer of the ceremonies, of his religion. The Grant'h, the sacred book of the Sikhs, was constantly read to him, and he must have been familiar with the moral precepts it inculcated. But—

Let observation with extensive view
Survey mankind, from China to Peru,

and the same invariable inconsistency will be found between professed belief and habitual conduct: nothing could be more different than the precepts of Nanac and the practices of Runjeet. By the former were enjoined, devotion to God, and peace towards men. The life of Runjeet was an incessant career of war and strife, and he indulged without remorse or shame in sensualities of the most revolting description. Nor did the excesses, over which he was at no pains to throw a decent veil, either detract from his dignity, or diminish the respect of his subjects; so depraved was the taste, and so low the state of moral sentiment in the Punjaub. It is no impeachment of the sagacity of Runjeet, that he was a believer in omens and charms, in witchcraft and in spells. Such superstition only proves that early impressions were not eradicated, and that his mind did not make a miraculous spring beyond the bounds of his country and his age.

No greater proof can be afforded of his penetration than his thorough appreciation and comprehension of the character and policy of the British Government.

From the moment that he allied himself with us, he appears to have cast away all doubt, jealousy and fear, to have treated us with uniform cordiality, and have reposed with entire confidence on our friendship and support ; a confidence which is now repaid by the exercise of our influence and authority to secure to his legitimate son, and designated heir, the inheritance of the kingdom which was created by the wisdom and the valour of his father.*

* The reign of Kurruck Singh, (who mounted the throne upon the death of his father Runjeet,) has been of brief duration.

CHAPTER VII.

HISTORY OF THE PUNJAUB FROM THE DEATH OF RUNJEET SINGH TO THE DEATH OF NOO NEHAL SINGH.

FROM the death of the Maharajah Runjeet Singh may be dated the commencement of the scenes of anarchy and confusion which to this moment have existed in the Punjaub. For some months previous to his demise, from his extreme debility and loss of speech, from paralysis, public business had been almost entirely neglected, the revenue misapplied, and order or method nearly annihilated. A few days previous to the event, the 28th of June, 1839, the Maharajah, conscious of his approaching end, ordered the whole of his superior officers, European and native, to be assembled in his presence, and caused them to take the oath of allegiance to the heir apparent, his son, the Koonwar* Kurruck Singh; the consequences of which were, that, contrary to general expectation, he succeeded to the throne of his father without the slightest tumult or opposition. Runjeet Singh was surrounded in his last moments by his favourite minister, the Rajah Dhyani Singh, the chief officers of his household, and the principal ecclesiastics of the kingdom, upon which latter he bestowed the most extravagant donations. Amongst other bequests, he directed that the far-famed Koh-i-

* Prince.

Noor diamond, valued at a million sterling, which he had so disreputably obtained possession of from Shah Soojah, should be given to the high priests of the celebrated temple of Juggernaut, a place of great sanctity, situated in the south of Bengal, whither religious fanatics, at a certain season annually, are in the habit of making a pilgrimage from the remotest parts of India ; but the intention of this latter bequest was not fulfilled, and from recent accounts the Koh-i-Noor is still in the Lahore treasury. For many years towards the latter period of his life, Runjeet Singh had been hoarding treasure, which may be estimated to have amounted at his decease to about eight crores of rupees in cash, or the same number of millions of pounds sterling, with jewels, shawls, horses, elephants, &c., to several millions more. Even at the present time, although much has been abstracted from the royal treasury, during the constant succession of troubles, it is doubtful if any court in Europe possesses such valuable jewels as the court of Lahore. Some idea of the vast property accumulated by Runjeet Singh may be formed from the circumstance of no less than thirteen hundred various kinds of bridles, massively ornamented with gold and silver, some of them even with diamonds, being found in the royal treasury.

The funeral obsequies of this extraordinary man were too remarkable not to be mentioned here. Upon his death being made public, the whole of the Sikh Sirdars at Lahore, assembled to do honour to his suttee, and four of his favourite queens, together with seven female slaves, having, in conformity with the horrible practice of the country, expressed their intention of burning themselves upon his funeral pile, preparations were immediately made for the solemnity. It is said that much dissuasion is exercised in cases of suttee ; ostensibly such may be the case ; but in private, every argument to the contrary is made use of

by the relatives of the wretched victim, and the promise once given cannot be retracted. A street of a double line of infantry having been formed, the procession proceeded at a slow pace to its destination, only a quarter of a mile distant, and within the precincts of the palace. The corpse of the late Maharajah, placed upon a splendidly gilt car, constructed in the form of a ship, with sails of gilt cloth to waft him (according to native superstition) into paradise, was borne upon the shoulders of soldiers, preceded by a body of native musicians, playing their wild and melancholy airs. His four queens, dressed in their most sumptuous apparel, then followed, each in a separate gilt chair, borne upon the shoulders of their attendants; the female slaves following on foot. Before each of the queens was carried a large mirror, and gilt parasol, the emblems of their rank. After them came the successor to the throne, the Maharajah Kurruck Singh, attended by the whole of the Sikh Sirdars, barefooted, and clothed in white; none but persons of noble rank being permitted to join the procession. To the last moment of this terrible sacrifice, the queens exhibited the most perfect equanimity; far from evincing any dread of the terrible death which awaited them, they appeared in a high state of excitement, and ascended the funeral pile with alacrity. The slaves also appeared perfectly resigned, but less enthusiastic. The body of the Maharajah having been placed upon the pile, his queens seated themselves around it, when the whole were covered over with a canopy of the most costly Kashmir shawls. The Maharajah Kurruck Singh then taking a lighted torch in his hand, pronounced a short prayer, set fire to the pile, and in an instant the whole mass, being composed of very ignitable materials, was in flames. The noise from the *tom toms* (drums) and shouts of the spectators immediately drowned any exclamation from the wretched

victims. It was with some difficulty that the Rajah Dhyān Singh (Runjeet's minister,) under strong excitement, was prevented from throwing himself into the flames. Considerable doubt has been thrown over the sincerity of this intended act of self-devotion ; but the general opinion was that he fully intended it from the apparent absence of any motive for hypocrisy. The ashes of the founder of the Sikh dynasty were afterwards collected together and thrown into the Ganges, in conformity with the religious custom of the country.

It has been already stated the Maharajah Kurruck Singh ascended the throne of the Punjab without obstacle ; his son, the Prince Noo Nehal Singh, a brave but dissolute young man, from whom much opposition was expected, having been absent at the time at Peshawur ; but, notwithstanding the powerful auxiliaries of a well-filled treasury, a numerous and well-appointed army, and the able advisers of his late father, it is doubtful whether an individual could have been found less calculated to occupy the place of Runjeet Singh than his successor, Kurruck Singh. Naturally of very weak intellect, his education also totally neglected, he soon proved himself wholly incompetent to hold the reins of government. Some years previous to his death Runjeet Singh had taken into his especial favour the Dogra family of his minister, the Rajah Dhyān Singh, consisting of the minister's son, the Rajah Heera Singh, and his two brothers, the Rajahs Goolab Singh and Soochet Singh ; upon all of whom he conferred the title of Rajah, with princely jagheers (lands) for their maintenance. These men, although of good family, were at one time so poor as to have served in the Maharajah's irregular cavalry as common dragoons upon a rupee a day. The three brothers, however, though almost uneducated, soon proved themselves men of such ability, that they rapidly rose in Runjeet Singh's favour, and, latterly, scarcely

any affair of importance was undertaken by Runjeet that was not entrusted to one of them. For a long time after the death of Runjeet their paramount influence over public affairs, added to their prodigious wealth, enabled them almost to hold the destinies of the Punjaub in their own hands. They were, however, more feared than liked, and looked upon with great jealousy by the other sirdars. They were all singularly handsome and well-mannered men, and in their mutual correspondence made use of a cypher known only to themselves. As may be supposed, the fraternity raised up many enemies. The most prominent among them were the Sirdar Cheyt Singh, Kurruck Singh's nearest friend and confidential adviser, the Misher family in charge of the royal treasury, and many other influential sirdars; the whole secretly aided by the Jemidar Kooshyal Singh, a nobleman of very high rank, and who had himself formerly filled the post of prime minister under Runjeet, until superseded by Dhyan Singh; all anxious for the overthrow of the minister's family. The consequences of this powerful combination were that the Rajah Dhyan Singh, although still nominally prime minister, found his authority virtually annulled. Revenge for the loss of power took possession of his thoughts, and he soon found an opportunity of carrying his intentions into effect. About this time the son of Kurruck Singh, the Prince Noo Nehal Singh, returned to Lahore from Peshawur. To this young man the Rajah Dhyan Singh now firmly attached himself, in the twofold expectation of ridding himself of his obnoxious rival, Cheyt Singh, and obtaining the full restoration of his power and authority as prime minister. Aware of the ambitious views of Noo Nehal Singh against his father's rule, Dhyan Singh found little difficulty in persuading him of the necessity of the removal of his father's favourite, Cheyt Singh, cajoling him with the prospect of his then superseding his

father, from the known incapacity of the latter to govern the country. The murder of Cheyt Singh was consequently decided upon between them. A chosen band, with the Rajah at their head, entered the palace at midnight, and cutting down the sentries, proceeded to the Maharajah's private apartments, where Cheyt Singh also resided. Public report, indeed, accused Kurruck Singh of scandalous improprieties with his favourite Cheyt Singh. Upon hearing the tumult, Cheyt Singh fled to the Maharajah's own apartment for protection, but it availed him nothing: the assassins entered and actually murdered him in the king's presence. His body was carried out and thrown into a hole which was hastily dug for the purpose. The murder of Cheyt Singh was followed by the imprisonment of the Misher family and confiscation of their property. The Jemidar Kooshyal Singh (given to understand that his presence at court could be dispensed with), and various other sirdars, betook themselves to their possessions. From this time the authority of the Maharajah Kurruck Singh ceased; he was shortly after formally deposed, and the Prince Noo Nehal Singh assumed the reins of government. Thus far the Rajah Dhyān Singh was successful in his projects, but an unforeseen difficulty now awaited him; he soon found himself egregiously mistaken in his fancied control over the actions of Noo Nehal Singh. The prince also had his favourites and confidential advisers, who were alike opposed to the Rajah and his family, with the advantage of ability equal to the Rajah himself, backed by the young prince's power and firmness of character.

His influence consequently became less than ever, and for a time he was scarcely permitted to take any share whatever in state affairs. To a minister so long accustomed to the sweets of power, this false position became scarcely supportable. Through the medium

of his son, the Rajah Heera Singh, between whom and the Prince Noo Nehal Singh an intimacy had sprung up, and which Dhyan Singh encouraged by every means in his power, he succeeded in re-establishing his position in the council, but never to the extent he had enjoyed under Runjeet Singh, or even under Kurruck Singh. The court of Lahore under its new ruler now became the seat of debauchery and intrigue. Secret and even pecuniary overtures were made by Noo Nehal Singh to the Courts of Nepaul, Caubul, and almost every other native power, to induce them to rise against the British from all quarters simultaneously. Upon one occasion he became so excited, when speaking of the British government, in reply to some malicious representations made to him, as to draw his sword in open durbar (the levee), and proclaim his intention never to sheath it until he had measured himself with the English. This ridiculous vapouring earned for him the *soubriquet* of the Hotspur of the Sikhs; but notwithstanding the disregard of his bravadoes by the British government, it is tolerably certain that, had he lived, a war with the Punjaub and Nepaul would have been inevitable, and Affghanistan would have taken part in the quarrel.


Pending this state of affairs, the serious illness of the deposed Maharajah Kurruck Singh began to occupy public attention. The Dusseera *fête*, held annually at Umritsir, was omitted; and whispers of the Maharajah labouring under the effects of slow but deadly poison, daily intermingled in small quantities with his food, began to gain ground, not without strong suspicion of the sanction, or at least connivance, of his son, Noo Nehal Singh. His death shortly followed, when one of the most extraordinary events occurred of which history presents a record. The funeral procession was much the same as that already described upon the demise of Runjeet Singh, with this exception, that

only two self-devoted victims sacrificed themselves to their horrible superstition. Returning from his late father's suttee, the elephant upon which Noo Nehal Singh was seated, in passing through the gate of the palace, pushed against the brick work, when the whole came down, killing the Rajah Dhyan Singh's nephew, who was seated upon the same elephant, upon the spot, and fracturing the skull of Noo Nehal Singh so dreadfully that he never spoke afterwards, and expired in a few hours. The incident is generally supposed to have been premeditated, and not the effect of accident, as stated by the Government ; but the whole affair was so enveloped in mystery, that even to the present day it has been found impossible to attach suspicion to any party, and the matter has now long since ceased to occupy men's thoughts.

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM THE DEATH OF NOO NEHAL SINGH TO THE PRESENT TIME.

THE astonishment of the whole Sikh nation, at the intelligence of the death of Noo Nehal Singh, may be more easily imagined than described. Nobody in the provinces at first believed it. When, however, the news became confirmed, the consternation and regret were very great, for notwithstanding his impetuous and dissolute habits, he was nevertheless a youth of considerable ability, and the only person capable of controlling the power of the Rajah Dhyan Singh and his brothers. The country, by this singular catastrophe, was thus suddenly plunged into an awkward dilemma. It was at length decided, by the advice of Dhyan Singh, to offer the crown to the Prince Shere Singh, a twin son of Runjeet Singh by his wife Mehtab. Considerable objection was at first offered by the Sikh Sirdars, upon the ground of his alleged illegitimacy, Runjeet Singh never having fully acknowledged the twins as his offspring. The opposition, however, was for the time overcome, and a messenger dispatched to Shere Singh with the glad tidings. For some time previously this Prince had taken no part whatever in public affairs, but lived in retirement upon his property, a very beautiful spot named Batt-e-alah, not far dis-



tant from Umritsir. Upon his arrival at Lahore, aided by Dhyan Singh, he attempted to assume the government; but by this time the widow of Kurruck Singh, Chund Koor, mother of Noo Nehal Singh, supported by a powerful faction, asserted her right to the regency, on behalf of the yet unborn offspring of Noo Nehal Singh; whose widow she affirmed to be *enceinte*. This tale, although not generally credited, supported by the influence of her party, enabled her to assume the regency of the kingdom; all orders were issued in her name; and even Dhyan Singh assisted at her councils. The Prince Shere Singh, seeing the overthrow of his hopes, returned to his country seat; and Dhyan Singh, without assigning any particular reason, also shortly after withdrew from Lahore to his own possessions, a mountainous country called Jummo, leaving his elder brother, the Rajah Goolab Singh, in the post of prime minister to the Queen Regent. Affairs continued in this way for a period of three or four months, when Shere Singh, arousing from his lethargy, determined upon testing his right to the crown by an appeal to arms. His first step was an application for assistance to the superior European officers in the Sikh service; but it so happened that these officers, with an exception or two, were all absent from Lahore at the time, on separate commands; and in reply to Shere Singh's overtures all declined identifying themselves in any internal political commotion. Shere Singh, thus left to his own resources, determined upon making a dash at the capital, trusting to chance and the hope of gaining over the army for success. He accordingly once more left Buttealah with a body of not more than 500 irregular cavalry; but, upon arriving within a few miles of Lahore, he was joined by two entire brigades, with their artillery, amounting to some 7,000 men, with which force he immediately commenced bombarding the city. Upon

the intelligence of the approach of Shere Singh, and the defection of these two brigades, the Queen Regent retired into the citadel, and having collected about three thousand troops under the command of the Rajah Goolab Singh, Lena Singh, and many other sirdars of her own party, determined upon defending herself to the last extremity. The bombardment continued for several days, but without any decided advantage on the side of the assailants, who naturally lost considerably more than the besieged, when the sudden arrival of the Rajah Dhyan Singh (from Jum-moo) in Shere Singh's camp, occasioned a cessation of hostilities, and soon changed the state of affairs altogether. After some negotiation between the Queen Regent and Shere Singh (highly advantageous, it is supposed, to the Rajah, who thereby became also fully restored to his former office of prime minister,) the Queen consented to deliver up the citadel, and acknowledge Shere Singh's right to the throne. She was shortly after murdered by her own slave girls, at the instigation of Shere Singh and Dhyan Singh, making good the political axiom, that the loss of life soon follows the loss of power.

It should here be observed, that the story of the pregnancy of Noo Nehal Singh's widow had already been discovered to be a gross fabrication, the young lady not being more than eight years of age, and the marriage never even to have been consummated. The Queen having withdrawn from Lahore, Shere Singh's accession to the throne was announced throughout the kingdom; but scarcely was he seated upon the throne, when the army, conscious that through their instrumentality he had gained his object, and instigated by large promises from the Queen's partisans, commenced a course of anarchy and disorder which for several months threatened the utter dissolution of the empire, and the unavoidable interference of the British power.

The demands of the soldiery were, increase of pay and the dismissal of all officers obnoxious to them. These claims not being admitted, the most frightful outrages followed, the government having no control whatever over the soldiery. The soldiers having elected a council of five of their comrades from each company in every regiment at Lahore, to represent their demands to the government, commenced by entirely annulling the authority of their officers, many of whom they at once murdered. The plunder of the city then followed, in which it is supposed that not less than two thousand persons were assassinated or perished, including all those government writers and servants who had in any way ever rendered themselves obnoxious to the army. The house of General Court (who, it should be stated, in common with the rest of the European officers, had declined identifying himself with the politics of the country), was stripped of every thing to the bare walls, and the General himself very narrowly escaped assassination before he reached a place of safety. General Ventura, who upon the news of the outbreak had returned to Lahore, had also a similar escape; the excitement, though without any ground whatever, being so great against the European officers. By this time, the disaffection of the part of the army at Lahore had also found its way amongst the troops in the provinces, who, emulating their brethren at Lahore, murdered the Governor of Kashmir in open court, upon his refusing to comply with some request from these miscreants, which he had no power whatever to grant. Lieutenant-Colonel Foulkes, stationed with a large body of cavalry at Mundee, also fell a victim to the lawless excitement of his soldiers; universally regretted by all who had ever known him. Lieutenant-Colonel Ford, another British officer, after having been plundered of every thing he possessed by his men, even to the ring

upon his finger, died at Peshawur, from illness and ill treatment, which he just contrived to reach alive. It was the intention of the troops to have sacrificed the lives of all the European officers ; but most of them having obtained information of this diabolical project the attempts were frustrated by corresponding energy. This critical state of affairs continued for some months, during which period there existed in fact no government at all, the soldiers doing just what they thought proper. One brigade, near Peshawur, intercepted and plundered a government treasure party escorting some seven or eight lacs of rupees to Lahore. After paying themselves all arrears and two months in advance, they permitted the party to proceed with what remained. The soldiers, at length tired of their own excesses, modified their demands throughout the whole army to the increase of one rupee per month, with a gratuity of two months' pay as the reward for their exertions in placing Shere Singh upon the throne. These terms being acceded to by the government, tranquillity became partially restored ; but from that period discipline and subordination may be said to have ceased in the Lahore army. The soldiers, conscious of their power, cared but little for the authority of their officers, or even of the Maharajah himself. A certain degree of order, or at least of quiet, being thus re-established, the Maharajah, by the advice of Dhyan Singh, accorded four months' leave of absence to the greater part of the troops, to enable the Minister to devote some attention to the internal administration of the country, which, as may be supposed, had been almost entirely neglected during the military revolt. Necessary orders for the collection of revenue were issued ; and the property of the most influential partisans of the late Queen Regent having been confiscated ; the Queen herself effectually got rid of, and others banished from Lahore,—affairs began to wear a

more favourable and tranquil aspect ; and on the return of the troops from their homes, the Maharajah, by the advice of his European officers, wisely caused all arrears to be paid up. The consequences of this judicious measure were, that the annual Dusserah *fête* at Umritsir, upon which occasion nearly the whole army is assembled and inspected by the Maharajah in person, passed off without the slightest tumult or disorder.

But this state of affairs was unfortunately not destined to be permanent. Shere Singh no sooner finding himself somewhat emancipated from the importunities of the licentious soldiery, than he gave himself up to every species of debauchery, passing the greater part of his time, when not engaged in the chase, either in drinking or in society of the worst description, to the total neglect of all the public business. A conspiracy, which eventually cost him his life, was consequently formed against Shere Singh, consisting of Lena Singh Scindewallah, Ajeet Singh, his own brother-in-law, and many other of the most influential sirdars, secretly headed by the prime minister, the Rajah Dhyani Singh. It may be here observed, that, upon all occasions Shere Singh expressed himself favourable to British interests ; and in justice to his memory, it should be added, that it was solely owing to his constancy that General Pollock's army was allowed an undisputed passage through the Punjaub to Peshawur, after the disasters of the British at Caubul, the Sikh Sirdars being all *strongly* disposed to take advantage of this temporary *contretemps* to British affairs, by attacking him. The refusal of Shere Singh to countenance this project only served to exasperate the confederation formed against him, although no opportunity offered of carrying it into effect until some time after. Affairs continued at Lahore in this state until the month of September, 1844, when the conspirators decided upon

carrying out the plot they had formed against the Maharajah's life, somewhat hastened by the supposition that he was in secret communication with the British Government, with the view of seeking its protection. The Maharajah was consequently invited to inspect the cavalry of Ajeet Singh on the following morning, at a short distance from Lahore, which he consented to do, notwithstanding that he had been repeatedly cautioned of the plot against his life, and of his brother-in-law, Ajeet Singh, being a party to it.

On coming upon the ground, a party of cavalry, badly dressed and appointed, was so posted as to attract his attention, and consequent displeasure. Ajeet Singh affected to excuse himself, and desired one of his attendants to bring him an English rifle, which he begged to present to the Maharajah; and in the act of presenting it, he dexterously turned the muzzle towards him and shot the Maharajah through the heart. A short conflict immediately took place, in which the Maharajah's attendants were quickly overpowered; several were killed, and the remainder took to flight. Shere Singh's head was then severed from his body and fixed upon a pole, and carried all round the camp of Ajeet Singh. His body was claimed and given up during the day to two of Shere Singh's wives, and the usual suttee rites performed over it. In the mean time, Ajeet Singh, after the committal of this atrocity, directed his steps towards the city; but meeting the Rajah Dhyen Singh in his carriage, he dismounted and got into it, with the intention of returning together. It appears that a dispute took place between them respecting the future form of government, but which was quickly terminated by Ajeet Singh stabbing the Rajah to the heart. He afterwards caused his head to be cut off, and sent it to his son, the Rajah Heera Singh, of whom further mention will be made. Ajeet Singh, after having caused the whole of the late Maha-

rajah's family to be murdered, even to an infant born the day previous in the Zenana, then shut himself up with his followers in the citadel. No sooner had the Rajah Heera Singh recovered from the grief and stupor in which the murder of his father had plunged him, than he called upon the army to avenge the twofold murder. His orders were promptly obeyed by the troops and European officers, then at Lahore, and the citadel being invested, a heavy fire of artillery was opened upon the walls, which soon began to crumble before it ; and, a practicable breach being effected, it was immediately carried by assault, and the greater part of Ajeet Singh's followers massacred. In the mean time, Ajeet Singh, foreseeing the result, endeavoured to escape by lowering himself by a rope from an unfrequented part, but being seen and recognised by a party of soldiers, he was pursued and put to death, his head severed from his body and taken to Heera Singh, who rewarded the soldiers with ten thousand rupees. Tranquillity being again temporarily restored, a council, with Heera Singh at its head, was held, at which it was determined to place a reputed son of the late Runjeet Singh, Dhuleep Singh, the present Maharajah, a boy about ten years of age, upon the throne, with the Rajah Heera Singh as minister, which was accordingly carried into effect immediately. But a very short time elapsed before the uncontrollable soldiery renewed their preposterous demands for increase of pay (upon the same grounds as under the Maharajah Shere Singh), together with the dismissal of the whole of the European officers ; demands with which Heera Singh had no alternative but to comply. But even these concessions (generally a mark of weakness) were insufficient to check the progress of anarchy and intrigue. The Rajah Soochet Singh, Heera Singh's uncle, jealous of his nephew's power, resolved upon supplanting him in his

position of minister. He accordingly, with a few trusty followers (not more than fifty), left his native place, Jummoo, for the capital, in the hope of gaining over the troops, stationed at Lahore, for the accomplishment of his object, and which he was assured by his partisans was a necessary procedure. He however found himself egregiously mistaken: for Heera Singh, who had notice of his uncle's intentions, assembled and harangued the troops; and by his promises so prevailed upon them, that upon Soochet Singh's arrival at Lahore, he did not find himself joined by a single soldier. Seeing this unexpected and desperate state of affairs, aware also that Heera Singh had secured the passage of the river, and that flight was consequently impossible, he shut himself up with his followers in a temple about three miles distant from Lahore, with the determination of defending himself to the last extremity. He was soon after attacked by several thousand of the Maharajah's troops, and although the party defended themselves for three hours against this large force, they were at length compelled, by the fire of artillery, to quit their hold; and after performing prodigies of valour in hand to hand combats, were massacred to a man. His remains, however, were respected, and the usual suttee rites performed over them. No sooner had Heera Singh freed himself from the attempt against his power, than the two princes, Kashmeera Singh, and Peshora Singh, also reputed sons of the Maharajah Runjeet Singh, declared themselves openly against him, encouraged by his remaining uncle, the Rajah Goolab Singh, the brother and the favourite wife (now widow) of Soochet Singh, whose joint animosity against Heera Singh, for the death of his uncle, knew no bounds. At their instigation, the princes crossed the Sutlege from Ferozepore, where they had been residing, with about a thousand men. They were met when a few miles upon their march, by some thousands

of the Maharajah's troops, and, after a conflict of some hours, Heera Singh was again triumphant. The princes made their submission to the government at Lahore, and were then left at liberty. Heera Singh's next step was to effect a reconciliation with his uncle, the Rajah, Goolab Singh, which, after considerable difficulty, he effected. Hitherto success seemed to attend Heera Singh's measures, but a third and more formidable combination was now formed against him, and which terminated in his destruction.

The army, over which Heera Singh in reality possessed no control beyond what the power of administering to their incapacity gave him, seeing his reluctance, or, more probably, inability, to comply any longer with their preposterous demands, lent themselves at once to any change likely to promote their object. The old Khalsa (state) chiefs, who had ever been adverse to the Rajah Dhyān Singh's family, and the mother of the young Maharajah, who made no secret of her animosity towards the minister, from his desire to keep the prince in a state of pupillage, if not to usurp his authority, now formed themselves into a faction for the overthrow and destruction of the minister.

Heera Singh soon became aware of the combination formed against him; his first step was to enlist a large body of hillmen from Jummoo as a guard to his personal safety; his next, to cut off the leader of the party, the Sirdar Jowahir Singh, the brother of the mother and uncle of the young Maharajah, who, backed by his sister and some of the military officers, sought a command in the army. A knowledge of the minister's design, or a resolution to precipitate a rupture, induced Jowahir Singh to proceed, at the head of a party of the Khalsa troops, to the minister's house, when a conflict took place, which ended in the flight of Heera Singh and his adherents, including his favourite councillor and confederate, the Pundit Jella, their route

being towards Jummoo. It appears that their escape was connived at, in order that the slaughter of the Rajah Sahib's party, which had been determined upon, should not take place in the city, and cause greater commotion there, and perhaps carnage.

They were, however, pursued by Jowahir Singh and several hostile sirdars, and overtaken about thirteen miles from Lahore. Heera Singh had with him, besides the Pundit Jella, Meean Sohun Singh (the Rajah Goolab Singh's son), and Meean Singh; his force did not exceed five or six hundred men. An action took place, which ended in the discomfiture of the minister's party; he himself took refuge in a hut in the neighbouring village, but being surrounded by the troops, who threatened to set fire to it, he came out and was instantly cut down. His head, together with the heads of Jella Pundit, who was overtaken three miles beyond the scene of action, Meean Sohun Singh, Meean Lal Singh, and two others, were brought to Lahore, carried about in procession, and exhibited before the house which was formerly occupied by Kurruck Singh, and is now tenanted by Jowahir Singh. According to one account, Heera Singh was betrayed by his own followers; another represents that the resistance was very fierce, and that upwards of one thousand men fell on both sides, but this must be an exaggeration. Jowahir Singh has stepped into the place of the minister, but it appears that the voices of the chiefs and army are in favour of Lena Singh Majeetea (who was residing at Benares,) who had been sent for, as well as Prince Peshora Singh; the latter had recently taken refuge from the resentment of Heera Singh at Ferozepore. The capital is said to be quiet, but these successions of violent changes destroy all hope of permanent government in the Punjab, at least during the minority of the prince. Lena Singh is a man of much ability, as well as of honesty,

and possesses great influence amongst the sirdars ; but he must expect opposition from some of the sources of discontent which have caused the ruin of preceding ministers. Moreover, the Jummoo Rajah is not very likely to be a passive spectator of the destruction of his family, and the Affghans are supposed to be preparing to take advantage of the troubles in the Sikh state to recover Peshawur.

Indeed the general opinion of the best informed authorities, namely, the European officers lately in the Lahore service, is, that tranquillity never can be permanently established in the Punjaub until under the firm rule of the British government, whose interference, it is fully anticipated, will, ere long, become unavoidable.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TREATIES CONCLUDED AT LAHORE AND THE PRESENT STATE OF THE AFFAIRS OF THE PUNJAUB.

THE tragical events which occurred at the Court of Lahore since the preceding narrative was written, which led to the aggression of the Sikhs and their final subjugation have been so often before the public and which are still so fresh in the recollection of every individual, that the compiler has thought it advisable to decline embodying them in this work ; but simply to introduce here the treaties concluded with the Sikh Government and the present state of the affairs of the Punjaub.

The proceedings at Lahore during the negotiations of the treaty have been of a very interesting character. Perhaps it was hardly to be expected, amidst such discordant elements, that the Governor General's negotiations would progress smoothly, or as he had desired they should ; and yet, under the helpless condition of the Durbar, and the obvious necessity which existed on the part of the Ranee and her advisers to come to a conclusion as soon as possible, a speedy settlement of his demands was by no means improbable. Such, however, has not been the case, and the settlement wears a very different aspect from what it was intended to be. The Governor General's demand was for a payment of one crore and a half of rupees (1,500,000*l.*) as expenses of the war, besides the cession

in perpetuity of the Jalundur Dooab, or country between the Beas and Sutleje ; that the state was to discharge all the old soldiers, and re-construct its army upon the regulations of the late Runjeet Singh, an amount of force being determined by the Governor General, and not to be exceeded by the Sikhs without permission; that the country was to be left to its own government, and Rajah Goolab Singh was for the time acknowledged Wuzeer ; that the jealousies of Rajahs Goolab Singh and Lall Singh had already reached a great height, and were likely to prove of very considerable embarrassment, if not while the Governor General and the force were present, at least when he should have taken his departure, and that Goolab Singh could hardly hope to keep his place, opposed secretly as he was by the Ranee, and openly by Lall Singh and many others ; that the army and the officers of the army, who must of necessity be employed again, all mistrusted him, and therefore it was most probable he would withdraw to his own possessions ; and such has, in fact, been the case, though after a very different manner to what was expected. It had been generally credited that the coffers of Runjeet Singh still contained much wealth, notwithstanding the liberal, or rather shameless manner in which they were plundered by Dhyan Singh, Heera Singh, and others of the Jum-moo family, who from time to time, have held the reins of government, and that the demand of 1,500,000*l.* would be speedily complied with. The event however proved very different. It was soon observable that that there was literally no money. The Governor General's demands were frequent and constantly reiterated, but without effect. What little was available in the treasury was produced, some 15 lacs, and the Lahore authorities were thrown into some straits for the remainder. The chiefs met on several occasions to consult on the emergency ; sometimes at Goolab

Singh's house, sometimes at the palace, and before the Ranee. These meetings, however, ended in little more than mutual recriminations, that person or this being accused by another of not having only plundered the state coffers, but with having made away with the proceeds of estates and various monies intrusted to their charge. At length a contribution by all was agreed upon, but the sum to be raised in this manner fell so far short of what was required, and the chances of collecting it within the time specified by the Governor General seemed so improbable of success, that the whole of the officers, as, indeed, well they might, appear to have sat down in utter despair. However, it was no time for idle talking, for the demands of the Governor General were more and more urgent, and strong hints were given that if the whole of the money was not paid, or good security given for it, the whole of the northern hill territory, including Cashmere, would be demanded, and taken in lieu of it. This might not have been unexpected by the durbār, but it was far from palatable, and a fresh attempt to levy the money by an assessment upon the chiefs and rulers of provinces was made, and a list was drawn up of 132 lacs, 50 of which fell to the share of Goolab Singh, on condition of his receiving the estates of the late Heera Singh and Soochet Singh. The object, apparently was to make up two crores, and the balance was to be offered in jewels, shawls, and other property. Whether there was any ground for the supposition does not appear, but it was supposed that if two crores were paid, the Governor General would give up the Jalundur Doab which he had already notified having taken possession of. The offer of this contribution, however, the Governor General would have nothing to do with, and it was rejected at once, the demand for the hill territory being removed; to which Goolab Singh (probably with the knowledge of what was intended,

should it be ceded) seems to have made no objection. The Ranee however, when the proposed cessions came to her knowledge, seems to have been in no humour to comply with it, and insisted on the money required being produced from the persons who had been assessed in the proposed contribution. A little enquiry, however, proved that the payment was out of the question, and that the hill country must go in lieu of it. Whereupon the Ranee and Lall Singh, being determined to spite Goolab Singh if they could, agreed to propose the cession, including Jummoo (Goolab Singh's own property.) This appears to have alarmed Goolab Singh exceedingly, and he openly declared that they might manage their affairs as they pleased, he would have no further concern with them, nor with the office of Wuzeer, to which the Ranee might appoint Lall Singh or any one she pleased ; that he should take his departure, and make his own terms with the British. It is very probable, that the alarm and vexation were but a *ruse* of Goolab Singh's to get free of Lahore, and throw himself entirely into the hands of the Governor General. There was evidently nothing to be expected from the Ranee and Lall Singh, on the performance of any promises they might make to him in their extremity, and the reason of the quarrel had, at last, some appearance of truth ; Goolab Singh could pretend to be vexed at the idea of being transferred to the English, whether he liked it or not, and could talk very large upon his old services and those of his family. He therefore, preserved his appearance of having been affronted, and affairs took the course he desired, and which were, probably, desired by the Governor General also, who renewed a proposal for the cession of the whole hill country, including Cashmere, Hazareh, and Jummoo, in lieu of the payment demanded. The Governor General must have closed with the offer directly, for the treaties

were drawn up, and the young Maharajah and all his officers attended at the Governor General's tent, on the 9th March, where the treaties were ratified and exchanged. By this, the Lahorestate, in articles 2 and 3, abandons all claim to the Cis-Sutlej districts, and cedes the Jalundur Doab, hill and plain. Article 4, states that a crore and a half of rupees having been demanded, in addition to the above, and the state being unable to meet or provide for the demand, the Lahore state cedes all the hill country between the Beas and Indus, including Cashmere and Hazareh, in lieu of the demand for a crore of rupees. Article 5 engages the state to pay 50 lacs on or before the ratification of the treaty, which, by the last accounts, had been paid. Articles 6 and 7 regard the army, by the former, the old is to be disbanded and newly constructed on Runjeet Singh's plan; by the second, its amount is fixed at 25 battalions of infantry, of 800 bayonets each, and 12 cavalry, but there is no mention of artillery. Should it be necessary to increase this force for any special cause, the cause is to be explained to the British Government, and the troops to be again reduced when the emergency shall have passed away. Article 8 regards the surrender of the remainder of the guns used in the war, which we have received; they had even reached Ferozepore, making the total number of guns in our possession 252! Articles 9 and 10 regard the control of the rivers, the tolls, the ferries, and the like, and the passage of the British troops through the Punjaub whenever there shall arise occasion. Article 11 engages the Lahore state not to take any European or American into its service without the permission of the British Government. Article 12 recognises the independence of Goolab Singhin such districts as may be made over to him by the British Government by a separate agreement, and all dependencies in his possession since the death of Kurruck

Singh, and declares, in consequence of his good conduct, that he shall be admitted to the privileges of a separate treaty. Article 13 declares that any dispute between Lahore and Goolab Singh shall be decided by the British Government and engages the Lahore state to abide by it. Article 14 decides that the Lahore boundaries cannot be changed without the consent of the British Government. Article 15, that the British Government will not exercise any interference with the internal administration of the Lahore state, but that, if asked for it, the Governor General will give his advice for the furtherance of the interests of the British Government. Article 16, and last, provides security to the subjects of either territory visiting the territory of the other.

The novelty in the treaty is the recognition of Goolab Singh as an independent sovereign, which must have been a bitter pill for the Ranee and Lall Singh to swallow; she who had determined only a short time before to have him assassinated, and Lall Singh in seeing his political rival so immeasurably exalted over his head. Jummoo is by the treaty, too, secured to Goolab Singh, so that their spiteful suggestion was apparently at the same time acceded to and prostrated. The other articles of the treaty are what might be expected, clear, stringent, and decisive, leaving the Lahore power only in its own territories, and unable to hinder any commerce on the river, or to undertake wars beyond its own frontier without special permission, and the recognition of the urgency of the expedition.

For the present, and until the end of the year, to be dismissed sooner if possible, a British force of 12,000 men remains at Lahore, at the special request of the Durbar. The request proceeded from the Ranee, who in her dread, could trust no one about her, and is a proof of the strong confidence she can repose in those

who were so lately her apparently bitter enemies. The request was made by the Durbar, but no doubt at the instance of the Moonshees, or perhaps of Lall Singh, in more general terms, which were very properly commented upon by the Governor General, who in reply, stated that nothing but the urgent request on behalf of the Lahore Government could induce him to leave a force at Lahore—that he desired to have no concern whatever with its government. This produced a formal and urgent request, on the part of the Maharajah, for the temporary occupation of Lahore by a force, on the ground that it would be impossible otherwise to provide against the machinations of evil-disposed persons, and the permission was granted by Sir H. Hardinge. The force to remain in the town and citadel of Lahore, the former being cleansed by 3,000 pioneers, who were employed in it with a view to the security of the health of the troops. We are to have complete command of the ramparts and those portions of the Summon Boorj which are not required for the residence of the women of the family, and there are still 100 guns in the arsenal which can be mounted on the works, should any necessity arise, independent of the 30 or more guns left with the force of occupation. Sir John Littler remains in charge of this force ; but, till it can be properly housed, and, there remains no chance of difficulty, the Commander-in-Chief remains also, with much of the army which is under General Gilbert. It is probable that all the arrangements would be completed by 20th March at farthest, when the force would break up and return to those cantonments to which they were allotted in recent General Orders. The whole are distributed amongst the north-western provinces only, and form an army of at least 40,000 men. On the morning of the 10th of March, there was a grand review of all the troops at Lahore, and 22,000 men, all the cavalry and

heavy artillery, defiled before the Sirdar leaders in the late battles. Lall Singh, Goolab Singh, Runjoor Singh, Tej Singh, and all or most of the Sikh chieftains, were present. In the evening, Sir Henry returned the Maharajah's visit. The Durbar was held in the Sheesh Mahal, and was an imposing and magnificent ceremony. As Sir Henry at this Durbar had addressed the Sikh Sirdars on the propriety of maintaining peace and establishing a firm government, so on the part of the Maharajah and the chiefs, Dewan Deena Nath read an address, expressing gratitude for the generosity and mercy of the Governor General, for the force to be stationed at Lahore, and acknowledging in suitable terms, the good advice tendered by Sir Henry the day before. After this the assembly broke up. The next day the chiefs attended at the Governor General's tent, when supplementary articles of agreement regarding the Lahore force of occupation and the territory added were drawn up and executed. Article 1 provides the force to be maintained at Lahore, specifying that it is not to be continued there beyond the end of the current year. Article 2, that the troops are to occupy the fort and city, whence the Lahore troops are to be removed, and that the Lahore Government is to pay the extra expense of the troops beyond their actual pay. Article 3 engages the Lahore state to re-organize its army as speedily as possible, and to report progress in this particular ; and Article 4 leaves the British Government at liberty to withdraw its force before the stipulated period in case this is not done. Article 5 engages the British Government to respect, during their lives, those jagheerdars' possessions in the added districts which (as I understand it) were granted by Runjeet Singh, Kurruck Singh, and Shere Singh ; and Article 6, provides that the Lahore state shall be assisted in recovering the arrears of the Khurruff, or early summer harvest, of the pre-

sent year (we, of course, receiving the amount of the Rubbee harvest now in process of collection). Article 7 allows the Lahore state to remove all property in the forts, &c., except guns. Should the British Government desire any of it, it shall be at liberty to retain it on a fair valuation. Article 8 provides for the settlement of boundaries, as defined in Article 4 of the new treaty. So concluded the negotiations at Lahore, the Governor General proceeded to Umritsir, where the treaty was concluded with Goolab Singh, and proceeds thence through the new Doab towards Simla, where he will remain till the end of the present year in all probability.

I have before stated that, according to my humble opinion, we should either take the country or set up a strong native government. We have done neither the one or the other. We have not taken the Punjab, evidently because we could not at this advanced season of the year have held it safely, or matured its subjection. For the army was dispersed, without artillery and without *material*. But the force at Peshawur was still strong, and the forts of Govindghur, &c., remained intrenched. Goolab Singh must have appeared doubtful to the Governor General, prepared either to support the Khalsas in a last desperate attempt, or to be quiet should he be able to strike out a path for himself either by means of the Lahore Durbar or the Governor General. Some 50,000 dispersed soldiers were in the country, whose employment would have been out of the question, and from whom constant acts of rebellion and rapine might be expected. At Lahore was a body of turbulent chiefs, all possessing jagheers, with fortified places in them, held by their retainers; not capable, perhaps, of any protracted defence, but sufficient to cause a great deal of trouble and anxiety, and protracted operations in the field. To these jagheerdars and military commanders, employment would have been

impossible, and they would have formed the nucleus of a vast amount not only of intrigue and opposition, but of constant disaffection. We should also thoroughly have aroused the national spirit. These were, I have no doubt, the prominent considerations of the Governor-General, and in conjunction with that moderation which he has displayed, and the fact that the whole of the army now in the field must be continued in active service, not only through the hot weather but perhaps the rains, at immense cost, for which there was no prospect of remuneration, have led him to the conclusion of the treaty which I have detailed to you. So far his refusal or objection to take the Punjaub has valid grounds, but there are points in the treaty which to my perception are objectionable. No Government whatever has been formed in the Punjaub, or, I think, likely to be formed. I do not even see that an army can be raised. Lall Singh is paramount for the time, but he is at the mercy of the jade who raised him to what he is, and for a new attachment may be murdered at any time. Goolab Singh is now separate and independent. The Punjaub is dismembered, 50 lacs have drained its treasury. Many of its tributaries are even now in rebellion; its army is not as yet; and, in spite of the acknowledgment of, and thanks for, the advice of the Governor General, the ministers and chiefs are by no means so united as they should be. And in the midst of this chaos of confusion we have an army and a political agent; and the Governor-General is pledged to the adjustment of disputes which may arise, perhaps not exactly this, according to the treaty, but what will amount to this in detail. For my own part, I would rather have seen the army withdrawn, the state left to its own resources, or, with boldness in consciousness of a just cause, the family of the state pensioned, and the rule, entire and absolute, assumed by us, in spite of the objections

which I have already recorded, which, formidable as they appear, would have been overcome by the same valour and perseverance as led us to Lahore. Mercy and moderation have so entirely guided the Governor General throughout this war, that we may well believe them to have been more than usually called into action by the sight of the unconscious young Prince, and the memory of many kindnesses received from Runjeet Singh in times of trouble, and the unbroken friendship of 40 years which we preserved with him. These alone can have actuated the Governor General in giving the Punjaub one more chance of maintaining its independence; for it is impossible that he can consider that existing circumstances hold out any fair hope, or any hope at all, that a Government will be set up or maintained. The point on which Sir Henry will find most embarrassment is the decision of questions which will be referred to him, and this he cannot now avoid. He might have avoided this; he might have left an army merely to keep the peace—merely to protect the young Rajah and his mother till they had one of their own, and have kept as strictly aloof from any questions relating to the internal government of the country as he apparently desires to do by the first sentence of Article 15. I cannot help thinking this the most inconvenient part of the treaty, and which the Governor General, will find it most difficult to extricate himself from with credit or peace. While there are conflicting parties in the state, he will not fail to be appealed to by one or other or both, and he will naturally espouse the one side or the other upon the tenour of his advice, as he may deem the one or the other to have a just ground of consideration. This sort of advice and support indirectly led to the Gwalior affair; and there must be something essentially different and superior in the constitution of the Punjaub state if it does not lead to the same conclusion there.

True, the Governor General has removed the grand element of discord, the employment of Goolab Singh and Lall Singh in the same place; but this has not extinguished the party spirit, and I believe it can only be extinguished there by the extinction of the Government. But we shall see the working of this in time; it may succeed, though probabilities are against it. The perilous position of the state, more perilous now than before, may induce the Chiefs to forget animosities and, if so, all will go well. I do not think it, nor do many whose opinions are valuable think it either; but that has nothing to do with the question at issue. We ought not, perhaps, to reason upon probabilities so much as possibilities in a question of this nature, which, dictated by great mercy and great forbearance, we may surely wish God speed, looking watchfully to the result, but trusting that it may be such as we desire.

Can the 20,000 Infantry and 12,000 Cavalry defend the Punjaub? Why the garrison of Peshawur alone amounts to this, and is only enough to keep the Affghans in check. Can it be defended with the limited amount that can be sent there under the new arrangement? And no Artillery is mentioned in the treaty. Does this mean that the Sikhs are to maintain none at all, or that they are to be allowed as much as they please?—Hardly the latter perhaps. It is probable that the system of Runjeet Singh embraced the plan of battalion guns, and that the proportion was, and is now, considered an integral part of a regiment.

The treaty with Goolab Singh, the recognition of his sovereignty over the whole of the hill tracts, is a piece of state expediency, a temporising with a great difficulty. The Lahore state had ceded these provinces, and without the whole of the Punjaub we could hardly have occupied them safely, or maintained our communications of Cashmere, tempting as it is. Therefore

the Lord of Jummoo has been elevated to a Maharaja ; and as we, after the cession of them, had an undoubted right to keep them or give them away, as we pleased, so we have apparently, sold them to Goolab Singh for 75 lacs, retaining a part of them, Kote Kangra and its dependencies, in addition to the tract between the Sutlej and the Beas, I presume in satisfaction for the 25 lacs which falls short of the crore and a half demanded from the Lahore state. I think the flourish about services might have been omitted. I cannot see what particular services this trimming chieftain has done for us. He came down from Jummoo as ready to throw himself into the scale of the Lahore state as into our own. He was ready and willing to espouse the strongest cause; and if we had lost the battle of Soobraon, we should have seen his hill men upon the Sutlej, and himself in command, most likely of the army or acting vigorously at Lahore as Wuzeer, in prosecution of the war. When we advanced, he did what he could to bring matters to an amicable termination; but the Sikh cause was up, and, had he not appeared on the stage, we should have treated with Lall Singh or Deena Nath, or any one else to the same end and purport as we did through Goolab Singh. The flourish then, about services might have been spared, for it provokes an examination of the question on moral grounds ; as one of political expediency, it is admissible. We have sold to him what was our own by formal cession. The Lahore Durbar cannot quarrel with us for this, nor say, " we would not have ceded this country if we had known you were going to give it to a man we deem a traitor ; for we made no stipulation for Goolab Singh, nor did the war arise out of a recognition of him over his ruler, as in the case of Ali Morad and the unhappy Scinde war. He and we were free agents, and it would have been as sheer hypocrisy in him not to have broken with Lahore

on the ground of old services and the like, after the murders of the members of his family, as it would have been in us to have debarred ourselves from a convenient arrangement on the same ground." I dare say there will be an outcry made about this in England and the old cry of "who made the English depositors and constructors of monarchies?" But as we are reduced to this condition, or elevated, whichever you will, we cannot help ourselves, and to my perception the case stands thus:—the Lahore state could not pay the demand we made, the justice of which no one will question, very unwillingly, and not till much time had been exhausted in fruitless negotiation, we accepted the territory offered in lieu of money. This territory we could not manage conveniently, so we sold it to the man to whom the Lahore state was at one time prepared to give it, for a crore of rupees. The Lahore state would have dismembered itself for this crore of rupees had Goolab Singh any faith in its promises or covenants. It is for the Government to say, or rather the Financial Department to give proof, whether we were actually so poor, so "hard up," to use a familiar phrase, as to be obliged to sell this acquisition, including Cashmere. I can only conclude this was the case, and that to temporize with the expense of occupation, we have, as it were, got out of the matter by setting up a new independent power, who should be our devoted humble servant.

The occupation and settlement of the Jalundur Dooab will occupy our time, and by all accounts, as it is a splendid and fertile country, will increase our resources. We are called upon for the present to undertake no distant wars, have no expensive communications to keep up. The road to Cashmere, through the territories of our ally, is open to us, and it is possible, as he is to have a resident at his Court, that he may be merciful to Cashmere—more merciful

than the Sikhs were. We shall occupy positions so close upon Lahore and Umritsir that the Sikhs dare not provoke us, or, if they do, it must render an entire subjugation of the country inevitable in one campaign. We have obtained some noble sites for the location of European troops, and I have no doubt, when the country is properly surveyed, that we shall see them established as far as possible in those salubrious and invigorating spots, instead of in the hot and weary plains.—*The India Correspondence of the London Times.*

CHAPTER X.

CLIMATE AND PRODUCTIONS OF THE PUNJAUB.

HAVING brought down the history of the Punjaub to the present moment, we now come to treat of those matters which most concern us as the probable future possessors of the interesting region under notice, namely, the climate, the people, the productions, and the commerce of the country.

The climate of the Punjaub varies not only with the seasons but the locality. The heat is at its greatest intensity in the month of June, when the thermometer has been known at Lahore to rise as high as 112° in a tent artificially cooled. Even in the winter, that is to say, between December and the beginning of March the thermometer at mid-day seldom falls below 70° and is often as high as 80° . The heat is for the greater part of the year accompanied by great dryness in the atmosphere, excepting at midsummer, when the rains of the Indian monsoon fall and continue for some weeks, the northern part of the country being much more plentifully visited by them than the southern. Early in the mornings of the winter season, and during the night, the cold is severe, the thermometer, even in the plains, falling in the north as low as 30° , while in the more elevated regions, which separate the Punjaub plains from Affghanistan, it is often down in the month of December to 2° below

freezing point. In Cashmere, however, a much greater degree of cold prevails. Snow falls in December, preceded by night frosts and foggy days (or what resembles fog) in November. The cold is then several degrees below freezing point, and the country is bare of vegetation. A sort of spring commences in April, accompanied by heavy rains, which continue until the beginning of June, when summer sets in with a thermometer range of 75° to 85° , and gradually verges into an autumn about the beginning of September. A milder temperature than the extreme summer heat can however always be obtained by an ascent of the mountains which encircle the valley.

The diseases common to British India afflict humanity in the plains of the Punjaub in a similar degree. Febrile complaints, diseases of the liver, agues, dysentery, and jaundice are common, especially at the close of the rainy monsoon; and cholera sometimes visits the populace, but is not so frequently fatal as the low state of medical knowledge among the Punjaabee practitioners would lead people to suppose. Certain old-wife remedies, such as decoction of the chicoree plant, are used with effect in combating jaundice, and it is not unusual to assail cholera with doses of the juice of onions, and dysentery with powdered charcoal or burnt cork. The deaths from disease throughout the army do not exceed one per cent. per annum; while in the upper regions of Cashmere, Ladakh, &c., the proportion is ever smaller; in fact, Kashmir, in spite of the periodical humidity of the atmosphere, boasts the finest climate in the world. The deaths from wounds and contusions are of course more frequent, for the science of surgery is as yet but little understood in the Punjaub, and nature, therefore, is generally obliged to act for himself.

If the Punjaub be not equal in fertility to the provinces of India under British rule, it is second only

to the most favoured of those districts, and were a few of the various improvements, in the art of manuring and cultivating the soil, which scientific men and zealous agriculturists have introduced throughout the United Kingdom and the colonies, once applied to the Punjaub, it is not unsafe to predict that the fruits of the land would soon be as unrivalled for their quality as their abundance.

The nearer we approach the rivers in the Punjaub, the greater the fertility. Irrigation, though of the most primitive kind, scientifically considered, does something for the districts remote from the great reservoirs, but still there are large tracts of country, where nothing but the mimosa, the tamarisk, and similar offspring of dry and sandy soils flourish. Again as we approach the mountains we find a richer country and many extensive jungles, exhibiting the natural productiveness of the country, and the urgent necessity for the regulating and directing hand of the farmer and the gardener.

The chief products of the cultivated and most fertile parts of the Punjaub are wheat and other descriptions of grain, indigo, sugar, rice, opium, cotton, hemp, assafoetida, and various sorts of oil seeds. The gardens yield guavas, dates, mangoes, limes, lemons, peaches, apricots, figs, pomegranates, plums, oranges, mulberries, grapes, almonds, melons, apples, beans, cucumbers, carrots, turnips, and a great variety of fruits unknown even by name to Europeans. Flowers, too, are likewise produced in beautiful profusion. In the more arid and neglected parts of the country, we find the date palm, wild palm, willows, acacias, the sissoo (an Indian tree valuable for its timber), the camel thorn, the byr apple, the madder (*tropœa*) and the wild rue. Shrubs and trees adapted for fuel are rare, in consequence of which the natives follow the practice of the people of Hindostan, and use cow-dung.

The mineral wealth of the Punjaub is considerable, but under the government of the Sikhs scarcely anything has been done to evolve and bring it into use. Iron, copper, lead, salt, coal, nitre, plumbago, and even gold mines abound in the country, and properly worked would furnish an enormous revenue. A jealousy of European interference and influence has hitherto caused these treasures of the earth to be neglected.

Animal life in a great variety of forms abounds in the country of the Sikhs. Lions, tigers, panthers, leopards, are found in the jungles, as are wolves, lynxes, hyenas, bears, wild boars, foxes, jackals, otters, weasels, martins, porcupines, &c. The deer tribe are numerous, from the goat to the sambar, and there is no deficiency of the bat family ; some of the larger of which latter are, according to Von Hügel, held in sacred estimation by the most devout followers of the Sikh religion. Camels are numerous ; buffaloes and sheep are found in large herds and flocks. The flesh of cattle is however respected by the Sikhs, who only use the milk of the cow and the wool of the sheep, in addition to the skins or hides of either animal, which form an article of export. The Sikhs are extensive breeders of horses, in which they take great pride. With Runjeet Singh admiration and love for these animals reached a passion, the knowledge of which induced the British government some years ago to send him some fine specimens of the cart-horse, in comparison to which the finest Punjaubee horses are but dwarf ponies.

The birds of the country are numerous and of great variety of character. Besides the common domestic fowl, the sparrow, the crow, the hawk, the magpie, the pigeon, and similar habitual tenants of the farm-yard, there are in the forests, fields, and lakes, pea-fowl and jungle fowl, partridges, pheasants, quails,

parrots, the wild duck, the teal, snipe, curlews, herons, cranes, eagles, pelicans, vultures, falcons, nightingales, the mocking-bird, owls, &c. The rivers swarm with fish, such as mullet, carp, &c., with a great variety totally unknown even by name to the European. As in all other parts of the warm and glowing East, reptiles are abundant, but the number of venomous serpents happily bears no proportion to the vast tribes of innocuous snakes. The bee and the silk-worm thrive in the Punjaub, and the fruits of their industry constitute valuable articles of trade and home consumption.

CHAPTER X.

COMMERCE AND MANUFACTURES OF THE PUNJAUB.

THE commerce of the Punjaub is extensive or otherwise, according to the political condition of the country for the time being. During the latter years of the rule of Runjeet Singh, the tranquillity which prevailed stimulated traffic, and a considerable commercial intercourse between the Punjaub, British India, and Affghanistan was the result. Since the demise of the Old Lion, however, trade has declined, owing to the distracted and insecure state of the country; the robberies upon the high road, vexatious exaction in the shape of duties and tolls, interruptions to manufactures, the absorption of capital in military armaments and civil contests, the withdrawal of large monetary resources from circulation and their removal to places of security, have all had their effect in checking and cramping mercantile operations. In ordinary and peaceful times, and under a wholesome system of rule, no doubt a very large trade might be firmly established; for, as we have shown, the products of the country are abundant, and in the hands of the people to whom the results of their industry are secured, may be turned to excellent account in a variety of ways. The manufactures consist chiefly of silks and cottons, arms, leather, and shawls; all, excepting the latter and the arms, which are the work of Cashmerian hands, very

superior to similar workmanship in other parts of India. The arms, which are principally made at Lahore, consist of swords, spears, matchlocks, muskets, pistols, and armour, the latter being composed of helmets or skull-caps, coats of mail, breastplates, gauntlets, and shields. Many of the latter are, however, often manufactured of thick hides, studded, knotted, and plated with iron or brass. Next to Lahore, the chief manufacturing towns are Umritsir, Mooltan, Shoojabad, and Leia. Shawls are made in considerable numbers at Umritsir, but they bear no comparison in quality with those manufactured at Cashmere, which once enjoyed so high a reputation in Europe, and which still possess a value in the eyes of women of taste and fashion. Perhaps a brief description, in this place, of the manner in which these beautiful garments are fabricated, will not be without interest or utility.

The tame goat, the wild goat, the wild sheep, the yak (a small ox), and some of the hill dogs supply the wool required in the manufacture of the shawl. This wool, which lies close to the skin of the animal, under the external coating, is of two colours, dark brown (sometimes approaching to black) and white, the former possessing about half the value only of the latter, which is better suited to dyeing. After the long hairs have been carefully separated from the mass, the residue undergoes a very careful washing, rice flour forming an efficient substitute for soap. As soon as the whole is perfectly dry, the spinning-wheel comes into play. Women are employed on this part of the business at a very low rate of wages. The yarn is then dyed, not less than sixty different tints being employed by the dyers. The raw material being prepared, the loom and shuttle is now brought into operation; the design of the pattern is drawn by one hand, another selects the proportions and quality of the threads, the warp and woof are arranged by a third

person, and then the weaving commences. The time occupied in the process depends in a great measure upon the pattern of the shawl; if it be brilliant and variegated, many months are consumed in the weaving; if simple, a shawl will be prepared in less than three months. It is unnecessary to tell the European reader, who has examined shawls from Cashmere, that the embroidered border is a separate piece of work attached to the middle by sewing. The value of the shawls when completed varies with the pattern. Moorcroft, one of the earliest English travellers in the Punjaub, computed a pair (for they invariably sell in pairs) of the most costly shawls at no less than 700*l*. Von Hugel estimates the expense of a tolerably fine pair at 200*l*. This of course refers only to the cost of production, and bears no proportion to the sums paid in England or India for the best offspring of the Cashmere loom.

As the arms made by Cashmerian workmen at Lahore are superior to the handicraft of the Punjaub, it may easily be conceived that those manufactured in the valley of Cashmere itself are of a still superior order to the products of Lahore. It is more particularly in the casting, boring, polishing, and staining gun and pistol barrels, that the Cashmerian artisans excel; but their sword blades are likewise of a good quality. Nor is it to these works alone that Cashmerian ingenuity is confined. Their lackered ware and jewellery, their leather, their polished paper, and aromatic oils, all claim attention for their peculiar beauty and superior quality. Nevertheless the commerce is insignificant in extent, for Sikh tyranny and misgovernment have in a measure blighted the efforts of the artisan.

The transit of goods from countries beyond the Indus to Hindostan, and *vice versa*, forms a larger source of mercantile revenue than the returns upon

the home manufactures upon the country. But in this respect also the paralyzing effect of internal disturbance has been felt, and the want of a fair system of collection of dues and tolls has at all times rendered the gross revenue precarious and infinitely below what would be obtained by an active, wise, and liberal administration. The goods imported from British India in quantities proportioned to the good understanding that may subsist with Afghanistan and other parts of Central Asia, are cotton, woollens, sugar, spices, dye stuffs, silks, ivory, glass, hardware, copper, and iron vessels and utensils, precious stones, drugs, and groceries. Those that come across the Khyber mountains into the Punjaub, are gold, silver, horses, the lapis lazuli, cochineal, madder, safflower, assafoetida, fruits, wool, Russian cloths and hardware, silk, and some coarse cloths. The exports from the Punjaub are grain, hides (of animals that have died, for the slaughter of kine is prohibited), wool, silk and cotton fabrics, ghee, indigo, horses, shawls, and carpets. At the risk of repetition, it may be stated that the principal marts of the commerce of the country are Mooltan, Umritsir, Leia, and Lahore. The trade is carried on with the north-west and south-east by means of camels, mules, and donkeys; but from one part of the Punjaub to another, the five rivers afford the readiest channels of transport, and from the south to the western point of the territory of Scinde, Cutch, and Western India, the boats of the Indus convey the produce and manufactures.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GOVERNMENT AND ARMY OF THE PUNJAUB.

ALTHOUGH, under any circumstances that may arise to give the British a more direct influence over the Sikhs, it is to be presumed that the system of rule that has been in force since the latter became an independent nation, will not be tolerated in its original form ; it may nevertheless be useful to describe the nature of the government to which the people have been accustomed.

In a previous chapter we have shown that, after the overthrow of the Mahomedan dominion in the Punjaub, the Sikh chieftains formed themselves into an oligarchy, which, like all similar institutions of which history preserves a record, gradually fell under the yoke of one family more potent than the rest, and at length of one man. The only government, therefore, of which the Sikhs have had any experience were the aristocratic and the despotic, and judging from their conduct and their internal prosperity under these respective systems, we have no hesitation in coming to a conclusion that a despotism is the best suited to their temperament.

Runjeet Singh exercised an absolute and arbitrary sway over the people, constituting himself chief judge and referee in questions of importance, collecting and appropriating the revenue, appointing and removing

all the state officers at will, personally regulating all political negotiations, and exercising the royal prerogative of coining money and making war. Under his rule the whole country was divided into provinces, and these provinces into districts, which were farmed out to the highest bidders. The Maharajah pressing upon the provincial administrators for their quota of revenue, and these authorities, who were armed with the terrible power of life and death, in their turn grinding the farmers with their exactions, the condition of the peasantry, whom the farmers in like manner squeezed for rents, was always the most abject and pitiful that can be conceived. The provincial governor, remunerating himself with the surplus of the revenue which he had contracted to pay the sovereign, seldom at a lower rate than four annas in the rupee, or one-fourth of the estimated annual value of the cultivated land (about 2,500,000*l.* sterling,) was unscrupulous as to the means by which he wrung their substance from the landholders. The rabble soldiery placed at his disposal for the defence of the portion of the state committed to his custody and government were continually employed to coerce the zemindar, so that, whatever might be the lot of the latter, and of the ryots, or villagers, who tilled the earth, the administrator of the province was seldom without a satisfactory share of its fruits. Many of these men consequently became rich and powerful chiefs, and although, in several instances, sprung from the dregs of the populace, attained a high rank, not only as lairds of extensive provinces, but as officers of the state. The late Rajah Dhyān Singh, who was for a long time Runjeet Singh's prime minister and chief conductor of all the negotiations with the British government, was originally but a private dragoon or trooper upon one rupee (two shillings) per diem.

The revenue system in force in Runjeet Singh's time continuing to this hour, it may readily be con-

ceived that the transfer of the country from Sikh to British rule will not be unacceptable to the agricultural population, who see that, in the provinces of India, contiguous to the Punjaub, the cultivator enjoys in peace and security a fair proportion of the results of his industry.

Amongst the Mussulmans this desire for a change of masters is particularly strong, and there is no doubt that in time the Hindoos would become equally reconciled to a just and equitable system of government; but at present the feeling of the latter against a race, who are not restrained by religious obligation from the use of animal food, is anything but friendly. The Sikh soldiery are to a man opposed to British supremacy, for its establishment would prove a death-blow to their licentious and reckless habits, and destroy the chances of advancement which are great in proportion to the prevalence of anarchy and civil discord.

A description of the Sikh army is not irrelevant to the subject of this chapter.

This force, consisting of about 110,000 men, is divided into regulars and irregulars; the former of whom, about 70,000 strong, are drilled and appointed according to the European system. The cavalry branch of the disciplined force amounts to nearly 13,000, and the infantry and artillery to 60,000 more. The irregulars, variously armed and equipped, are nearly 40,000 strong, of which number upwards of 20,000 are cavalry, the remainder consisting of infantry and matchlock men, while the contingents, which the sirdars or chiefs are obliged to parade on the requisition of the sovereign, amount to considerably above 30,000 more. The artillery consisted in Runjeet's time of 376 guns, and 370 swivels mounted on camels or on light carriages adapted to their size. There is no distinct corps of artillery as in other services, but there are 4,000 or 5,000 men, under a daroga, trained to the duty of gunners and

these are distributed with the ordnance throughout the regular army. The costume of the regular infantry is scarlet, with different coloured facings, to distinguish regiments, as in the British service. The trousers are of blue linen; the head-dress is a blue turban, with one end loose, and spread so as to entirely cover the head, back of the neck, and shoulders; the belts are of black leather; the arms, a musket and bayonet, the manufacture of Lahore. The cavalry wear helmets or steel caps, round which shawls or scarfs are folded. The *irregulars*, in their dress and appointments fully justify the appellation which their habits and mode of making war obtained for them. Cotton, silk, or broad cloth tunics of various colours, with the addition of shawls, cloaks, breast-plates, or coats of mail, with turbans or helmets, *ad libitum*, impart to them a motley but picturesque appearance. They are all badly mounted, and, indeed, little can be said even of the regular cavalry in this respect. The Punjaub breed of horses is far from good, and they do not import stock from other countries to improve their own cattle. The pay of the sepoys of the regular army of the Punjaub is higher than that of the same class in the army of the East India Company, each common soldier receiving ten rupees per mensem. The troops of the irregulars receive twenty-five rupees each, out of which they provide their arms and clothing, and feed their horse, putting the government to no other expense whatever for their services.

Enlistment in the regular army of the Punjaub is quite voluntary, and the service is so popular that the army could upon an emergency be increased to almost any amount. The soldiery are exceedingly apt in acquiring a knowledge of their military duties; but they are so averse to control that instances of insubordination are common; latterly, indeed, open mutiny has frequently characterized the relations of officer

and soldier. Insubordination is punished—when punishment is practicable—with confinement, loss of pay, or extra duty. But in the present state of military disorganization no means of chastising rebellion are available.

No pensions were, or are, assigned to the soldiery for long service, nor is there any provision for the widows and families of those who die, or are killed, in the service of the state. Promotions, instead of being the right of the good soldier in order of seniority, or the reward of merit in the various grades, is frequently effected by bribery. In the higher ranks, advancement is obtained by the judicious application of *douceurs* to the palm of the favourites at court, or the military chieftains about the person of the sovereign. In the event of the government of the Punjaub falling into the hands of the British, some time would probably elapse before the dissolute rabble which now composes the army could be brought under a state of as perfect discipline as that which exists in the Anglo-Indian army; but there is no doubt that ultimately the result of a system, strict and severe from the commencement, when supported by a stern and absolute monarchy, would display itself, and render the Sikh troops as devoted a body as the regular native army of Hindostan. Only twenty-three years have elapsed since the military force in the Punjaub consisted of a large and undisciplined horde. In 1822, the first European officers presented themselves (according to Prinsep) at Runjeet Singh's Durbar, seeking military service and entertainment. These were Messrs. Allard and Ventura, who had served in the French army until the annihilation of Napoleon Buonaparte deprived them of employment. At first, Runjeet Singh, with the suspicion common to a native Indian prince, received them coldly; and his distrust of their purposes was heightened by the Punjaubee chieftains, who

who were naturally jealous of the introduction of Europeans into the military service ; but a submissive and judicious letter from these officers removed the apprehensions of the Maharajah, and he, with the spirit and originality of a man of genius, admitted them into the service ; appointing them instructors of his troops in the European system of drill and warfare. The good conduct and wise management of these gentlemen speedily removed Runjeet Singh's prejudices against Europeans ; and the door to employment being thrown open, several military men entered the service of the Maharajah, and at the close of his reign there were not less than a dozen receiving his pay, and, to use an Indian expression, "eating his salt." The successors of Runjeet Singh, however, did not look with an eye of favour upon men who were not to be bought, and whose sense of personal dignity revolted at the treatment to which the unbridled Sikh chieftains were inclined to subject them. The greater part accordingly resigned their commissions ; some of them retiring with ample fortunes, and others seeking honourable employment elsewhere.

The Sikh army, until lately, was considered by many British officers, who had the opportunity of seeing it, to have been in a fair state of discipline. They form very correct lines, but in manœuvring their movements are too slow, and they would, in consequence, be in danger, from a body of British cavalry, of being successfully charged during a change of position. They would also run the risk of having their flanks turned by their inability to follow the motion of an European enemy with equal rapidity.*

* The author, in speaking irreverently of the Sikh army, may be considered in a measure to register his own condemnation. But the reader will kindly remember, that a lieutenant-colonel only commands a single regiment ; and it may be inferred that, with his eyes open to the deficiencies of others, the author did his best to repair those of his own corps.

The arms, that is to say, the muskets, are of very inferior stamp, incapable of throwing a ball to any distance, and on quick and repeated discharges liable to burst. Their firing is bad, owing to the very small quantity of practice ammunition allowed by the government ; not more than ten balls out of a hundred, at the distance of as many paces, would probably tell upon an enemy's ranks. They still preserve the old system of three ranks, the front one kneeling when firing and then rising to load, a method in action liable to create confusion.

X In person, the infantry soldiers are tall and thin, with good features and full beards ; their superior height is owing to the extraordinary length of their lower limbs. They are capable of enduring the fatigue of long marches for several days in succession (the author having on one occasion marched with his regiment a distance of 300 miles within twelve days,) and are, generally speaking, so hardy that exposure to oppressive heats or heavy rains has little effect upon them. In a great measure this is the result of custom. Excepting in the vicinity of Lahore and Peshawur, there are few regular quarters or cantonments ; the men occupy small tents, or bivouac in ruined Mahomedan mosques or caravanserais.

The drum and fife and bugle are in general use in the Sikh infantry regiments, and in some of the favorite royal corps of Runjeet Sing, an attempt was made to introduce a band of music, but a graft of European melody upon Punjaabee discord did not produce, as may be imagined, a very harmonious result.

The cavalry of the Sikh army is very inferior in every respect to the infantry. While the latter are carefully picked from large bodies of candidates for service, the former are composed of men of all sorts and sizes and ages, who get appointed solely through the interest of the different sirdars. They are mean-

looking, ill dressed, and, as already stated, wretchedly mounted. Their horse trappings are of leather of the worst quality, and their saddles are of the same miserable material, and badly constructed. When the horse is in motion, the legs and arms of the rider wave backwards and forwards, right and left, by way, as it were, of keeping time with the pace of the animal bestridden. The horses are small, meagre, and ill shaped, with the aquiline nose which so peculiarly proclaims inferiority of breed. In the field, the conduct of the Sikh cavalry has generally corresponded with their appearance and efficiency. They are totally deficient of firmness in the hour of struggle, and only charge the foe when a vast superiority of numerical force gives them a sort of warranty of success. An anecdote occurs to the writer at this moment, which, as illustrating at once the efficiency of the Sikh troopers and the character of Akbar Khan, who afterwards became so famous in the annals of warfare by his treachery towards the British at Caubul, and by his total overthrow by the gallant Sale, will probably be read with interest.

In an engagement at Peshawur, in 1837, between the Affghans and the Sikhs, the former were at the commencement driven off the field into the defiles of the Khyber mountains. The Sikh cavalry, embracing the favourable moment, to the number of three thousand, dashed into the Khyber in pursuit. The favourite son of Dost Mahomed Khan had given battle in direct disobedience to the injunctions of his father, who had prohibited a collision under any circumstances.

Upon witnessing the flight of his troops, together with the loss of some pieces of artillery, in the moment of despair at the consequences he had brought upon himself, turning to his own personal suite, of which about 100 had remained with him, he addressed

them briefly on the shame and disgrace which awaited their conduct ; and being determined not to survive the disasters of the day, he induced them to make a last effort to retrieve their ill fortune. The Sikhs had now precipitated themselves about two miles into this fatal pass, which allowed but four horsemen to work abreast.

The little band above mentioned, with their leader at their head, resigning themselves to the will of the Comptroller of all Destinies, with their war shout of "Allah Akhbar !" threw themselves headlong on the foremost of their pursuers, who, by the superior weight of their Toorkee chargers, the nervous blows from the vigorous arms of their assailants, and the meteor-like charge, were on the instant overwhelmed and dismounted. The sudden check so unexpectedly sustained threw the Sikhs into confusion ; and, being ignorant of the number of their opponents, they wheeled round, and pell-mell rode over their own masses !—the Mahomedan sabre all the time doing its work brilliantly. Upwards of five hundred were left dead and wounded on the field, and the career of the faithful was only arrested by the bayonets, of the Sikh infantry. Here the charger of their brave leader, Akhbar Khan, received three musket balls and three bayonet wounds, and had one of his hind legs shattered by a spent ball. The noble animal fell ; and luckily for his rider was it so ordained, for at the moment he was hurled to the ground, a volley from the whole infantry emptied every saddle within range of its burden !

It is no more than just, however, to set off the foregoing anecdote by stating that the bravest troops of all nations have, at some time or other, been overthrown by a *coup de main* and its consequent panic. It might be invidious to particularize the instances, and would certainly be superfluous, for some of them are still fresh in the recollection of the present generation.

But although the Sikh soldier may not claim credit for a greater degree of prowess than other Oriental troops, he possesses some qualities invaluable to the military man. He has the faculty of subsisting upon a very small quantity of food—a faculty peculiarly favourable to the indulgence of his avarice; and he is capable of enduring great fatigue, and of accomplishing marches that none but Turkoman Tartars can perform. The distance from Lahore to Peshawur is 300 miles, and it has often been done in eleven days. The Sikhs have, indeed, acquired, from their remarkable pedestrian qualities, the epithet of iron-legged. f

It has been said above that the Sikhs are arrogant and insubordinate; it should be added, that they are less so in the field than in garrison, and it is only reasonable to conclude that even in quarters they would be more tractable were they governed by European officers. Hitherto there has never been at any one time more than twenty Europeans with the entire regular army of seventy thousand men.

In addition to the regular and irregular army the Lahore government has also in its pay a body of irregular cavalry, (to the number of between two and three thousand) called Akalees. They are religious fanatics, who acknowledge no ruler or law but their own; think nothing of robbery, or even murder, should they happen to be in the humour for it, Runjeet Singh himself having on more than one occasion narrowly escaped assassination by them. They are without any exception the most insolent and worthless race of people under the sun. They move about constantly armed to the teeth, insulting everybody they meet, particularly Europeans, and it is not an uncommon thing to see them riding about with a drawn sword in each hand, two more in their belt, a matchlock at their back, and three or four quoits

fastened round their turbans. The quoit is an arm peculiar to this race of people ; it is a steel ring, varying from six to nine inches in diameter, and about an inch in breadth, very thin, and the edges ground very sharp : they throw it with more force than dexterity, but not so (as alleged) as to be able to lop off a limb at sixty or eighty yards. In general, the bystanders are in greater danger than the object aimed at. Runjeet Singh did much towards reducing this worthless race of people to a state of subjection, but he only partially succeeded, and latterly they have become more intolerant than ever. They, however, fight with desperation, and are always employed upon the most dangerous service. In 1815, when the Maharajah's army was investing the city of Mooltan, the Affghans made so protracted and determined a resistance that Runjeet Singh was induced to offer very advantageous terms compared to what he was in the habit of doing under similar circumstances ; and during the progress of the negotiations, an Akalee, named Sadhoo Singh, with a few companions, advanced to the *fausse braye*, and without orders, in one of their fits of enthusiasm, attacked the Affghans, who were either sleeping or careless on their watch, and killed every man ; the Sikh army took advantage of the opportunity, and rushing on, in two hours carried the citadel, Muzuffer Khan and his four sons being all cut down in the gateway after a gallant defence.

To revert to the subject of civil government. The revenue arising from the land is assessed, in the case of the grain lands, by appraisement or the division of the produce in the field ; the former is often settled by collusion between the chief and the party called in to appraise it, and the latter is regulated by the caprice, power, necessity, or despotism of the chiefs ; some of whom claim one-half, others two-fifths, and some have been known to appropriate as much as three-fourths

of the whole. The lands of most towns and villages are parcelled out amongst the Zemindars, who, as already stated, are answerable for the share of the sovereign. Every chief exercises the privilege, by prescription, of taxing trade ; yet the duties, though levied at every ten or twenty miles, are light. To save themselves the trouble of constantly recurring payment, the merchants generally contract for the conveyance of a caravan of their goods from one point of the country to another, the party who takes charge of them paying all duties through the states which they pass ; should any chief, however, impose a vexatious tax, the conductor of the caravan has the power of changing the route and conveying the goods through the possessions of one who has the power to protect, and the inclination to encourage, the transit of traffic through his domains.*

The revenue is in too many instances collected *vi et armis*, and sometimes falls short of the amount estimated above, for the tribes residing in the vicinity of the mountains, especially those called the Yousuffzyes (who have never been properly and entirely subdued), often succeed in resisting payment by flying to their fastnesses, carrying with them everything of the smallest value, and there defying the pursuit of the soldiery. As a consequence of a frequent deficiency of revenue, arrears and irregularity distinguish the adjustment of the accounts in every department of the state.

The exercise by the chiefs of the office of judge in all civil and criminal cases dispenses with the establishment of regular courts of law. Custom and caprice, therefore, are substituted for the *lex scripta*, and much injustice is necessarily the result. As there is a strong disinclination to inflict capital punishment, crimes and trespasses are generally atoned for by fines

* Murray.

levied according to the means of the offender, whose property is attached, and his family placed under restraint to enforce payment. The adoption of this mode of chastisement is preferred by the rulers for the additional very satisfactory reason that the fines form a branch of revenue. But it is not the criminal alone who pays. When the innocence of an arraigned individual deprives the judge of a pretext for lodging a heavy impost, he exacts from the prisoner a present of gratitude called *shookurana*. In civil cases pecuniary contributions are also levied. The plaintiff, if he carries his point, pays the *shookurana*, and the defendant is mulcted as a punishment for being in the wrong and consuming the judge's time. Mutilation is sometimes resorted to—to the extent of cutting off the hands, the nose, or the ears ; but even in respect to this kind of penalty money is found to be efficacious. A tolerable bag full of rupees is often accepted as compensation in full for the retention of a limb or a feature. Highway robbery and burglary are visited by the demand of a sum equivalent to the value of the property taken away ; but should opposition be raised by the chief on whom the demand is made, the *sirdar*, whose subject has suffered, proceeds to retaliate by driving away many head of cattle from the offender's lands.

On the discovery of a petty theft, the sufferer has to pay the fourth of the amount he may have lost to his chief before it is restored to him ; and when the robbery has been committed by a body of accomplices, the one who turns king's evidence is allowed to escape with impunity, and to retain his share of the spoil. In all cases of stolen cattle, the *zemindars*, when the footsteps are traced to the entrance or into the fields of any village, must either show the track beyond their own boundary and suffer their territory to be searched or pay the value of the cattle.

As letters are not cultivated among the Sikhs, even to the extent of reading and writing, all concerns are transacted by oral testimony, verbal promises and agreements. Questions of right to property coming before the grand arbiters, are determined by the recollection of the oldest witnesses; and though these persons give their testimony on oath, money and favours are so unsparingly distributed to ensure a serviceable statement, that perjury is frequent, and justice a mere mockery. Trial by ordeal is sometimes claimed by an accused party, and its efficiency being implicitly believed, a courageous rascal will often escape the imputation of guilt by thrusting his hand into boiling oil, or bearing a heated ploughshare on the soles of his feet.

This is but a rough outline of the system of internal government, but it is all that can be said upon the subject at a time when anarchy is so rife, that rule of any kind is purely nominal. There are of course many usages in force for preserving society together, protecting public and personal rights, and chastising wrongs, when order is in the ascendant, but as these are the result of a common understanding, and assume the character of by-laws, they are reserved to be treated in the ensuing chapter on manners, customs, &c.

CHAPTER XII.

POPULATION, MANNERS, AND CUSTOMS.

No regular census having ever been taken, it is extremely difficult to arrive at even an approximation to the amount of the Sikh population. Burnes computed it at 3,500,000, exclusive of the Cashmerians, Ladakhis, and Bultis, (natives of Ladakh and Bulti,) who might amount to 1,200,000 more; but native authorities give a much larger estimate, and other European travellers fall below Burnes's computation. This population is composed of a great variety of races and religions; but the bulk may be said to be divided into Hindoos and Mahomedans, the former of whom are in the proportion of three to one of the latter.

The Sikhs or Punjaubees, who form the mass of the regular resident population as distinct from the fluctuating visitors, are a handsome race of men, resembling Hindoos in general, but with a finer muscular development, and a more robust appearance, arising from the superiority of their climate, and the use of a more generous diet than the people of British India allow themselves. Their costume consists of a jacket and trowsers, the latter extending to the ankle, and worn tighter than is customary with other orientals, who keep the leg covered. Turbans sometimes form the head-gear, but shawls and scarfs are more com-

monly used, because the ends admit of being spread over the neck and shoulders as a protection from the sun. The women wear very wide trowsers, with an upper garment not very dissimilar to a frock coat, with the addition of the shawl or scarf in the cold season.

In their diet the Sikhs are extremely simple. Rice and attah, a coarse kind of flour, constitute the staple of their food, to which they add the flesh of fowls, fish, condiments, and spices, milk, vegetables, and fruits. Beef is interdicted, and mutton sparingly used. They are much given, however, to the use of intoxicating liquors, and can resist 'potations, pottle deep,' of a fiery spirit, a very small dose of which would overthrow an Englishman. Runjeet Singh was remarkable for his excesses in this way, and in his latter days jocosely declared that there was only one British officer who could approach him in the copiousness of his libations to Bacchus. This habit, added to others of a revolting character, places the Sikh very low in the scale of humanity. The Cashmerian is not a whit better. He is a liar and a juggler; selfish, superstitious, ignorant, dishonest, and false.* The virtues which the Sikhs link to their heavy catalogue of vices, are few in number. Charity to faquirs (religious fanatics) constitutes almost their only good quality, and even this is the result of superstition. Charity is exercised as a part of a religious duty, which is supposed to carry with it ultimate rewards. Offerings of grain and money are deposited in the temples, and each of these edifices has a corps of chilas of licensed beggars attached to it, whose business it is to scour the country, and by importunity to raise funds for the support of the institution and themselves, and the gratis entertainment of travellers and strangers who may halt for

* Moorcroft.

2 a temporary repose. Each village contributes a sum, levied by the chief, to form a fund called the Mulah, which is dispensed to wandering beggars and necessitous strangers. Sometimes small parcels of land are assigned to professional mendicants, who take up their abode upon them, and are reputed to pass their time in craving benedictions upon the head of their liberal donor. Thus it is apparent that no part of the charity of the Punjaabee is the spontaneous effusion of a kind and liberal overture, but is either dictated by the hope of obtaining beatitude, or by a sense of the duty of a nation, in a political view, to support its poorer classes. 6

The customs of the Sikhs in respect to successions to property and the possessions of lands, are described with so much fidelity in a paper translated by Captain Murray, and forming the appendix to Mr. Prinsep's memoir of Runjeet Singh, that the author will be excused for offering a portion of the paper verbatim, in preference to recording his own crude impressions upon the subject. Continuous field service in isolated districts does not furnish a person with means for the acquisition of knowledge of purely civil usages, and yet a work of this kind would be incomplete without details upon subjects of so much importance.

“ The rules of succession to landed property in the Sikh states are arbitrary, and are variously modified in accordance to the usages, the interests, and prejudices of different families, nor is it practicable to reduce the anomalous system to a fixed and leading principle. A distinction obtains in the Canons of Inheritance between the Manjhee and Malwa Sikhs, or Singhs; the former are so termed from the tract situated between the Ravee and Beeah rivers, from which they originally sprung, migrating thence and extending their conquests through the Punjaub and into the Sirhind province, where, being of a military and predatory character, they soon conquered for them-

selves a permanent possession. The practice of succession to property, both real and personal, amongst the Manjhee Singhs, is by bhaeebund and choondabund. The first being an equal distribution of all lands, forts, tenements, and moveables, among sons, with, in some instances, an extra or double share to the eldest, termed "khurch sirdaree," assimilating to the double share in the law of Moses. Choondabund is an equal division among mothers for their respective male issue.*

"This practice accords with the Hindoo and Mosaic laws, and acts as a counteractive to the many evils attendant on female rule. If the free-will of the widow were consulted, it is scarcely to be doubted she would prefer the possession of power and the charms of liberty, to the alternative of sacrificing her claims to her brother-in-law, and taking her station amongst his rival wives. Judging from the masculine disposition, want of modesty, and of delicate feeling, which form the characteristic feature of Sikh females, necessity and not choice, must have led them to yield to the adoption of an usage, which must often be repugnant to their natures, and disgusting to their thoughts.

* "This practice of choondabund is agreeable to the Hindoo law. Vyasa says, if there be many sons of one man, by different mothers but in equal number and alike by class, a distribution amongst the mothers is approved to Brihaspati. If there be many springs from one, alike in number and in class, but born of rival mothers, partition must be made by them, according to law, by the allotment of shares to the mothers.

"When a Manjhee Singh dies, leaving no male offspring, his brothers, or his nephews, of the full blood, assume the right of succession, to which the widow or widows become competitors. According to the Shasters (if they may be considered applicable to public property and chiefships,) the prior title of the widows is held; but the Sikhs, with a view to avoid an open and direct violation of a known law, have a custom termed kurawa, or chadurdalna, which obtains in every family, with the exception to those of the Bhaees, the eldest surviving brother of the deceased places a white robe over, and the neeth or ring, in the nose of the widow, which ceremony constitutes her his wife."

“ On failure of brothers and nephews, the general practice is equal division of lands and personal effects amongst the surviving widows of Manjhee Singhs. Adoption by the widows is not allowed, and the female line is entirely excluded from the succession, to prevent the estates merging in the possessions of another family. The inconvenience and evil, originating in the prevailing practice amongst the Manjhee families, of successive and minute subdivisions of landed property, aggravated by the system of coparcenary possession, are seen, felt and acknowledged, and the mischief of such a system cannot be too soon remedied.

“ Amongst the Malwa Singhs, the rights of primogeniture in the males are respected, and jageers, or grants of land, are assigned for the maintenance of younger sons, by which the many inconveniences, noticed in the practice, or rule established amongst the Manjhee families, are obviated.

“ The Malwa Singhs, with exception to the Bhaees, sanction and admit the usage of kurawa, thereby opposing a bar to disputed succession between the brothers, nephews, and the widows of a deceased chief.

“ Bhaees of Khytul, and other places, although they reject the union by kurawa, yet set aside the claims of a widow, in favour of the brothers and nephews of one dying without male issue. The widows of Bhaees receive small jageers (lands) for their support during life.

“ The Mahomedan families scattered over the Sikh states, who have been enabled to preserve their existence, and the shadow of power, reject the ordinances of their lawgivers, and are guided by rules of their own forming. Were the Mahomedan and Hindoo laws of inheritance, as inculcated by the Shura and Metakshara, to be made the leading principle in succession to landed property, very few, if any, of the many principalities in India would remain entire, and

a common distribution would become universal, to the extinction of great estates, and the annihilation of the chiefs, with their aristocratical influence.

“ When the country, overrun by the Sikhs, had been parcelled out into new allotments, the former divisions into districts, as established during the reigns of the Dehlee Emperors, and recorded by the Kanoongoes, or rule-tellers, became void, and much angry litigation arose in respect to the village boundaries and waste lands, the cultivators originated the cause of dispute, and the effect was in most cases an appeal to arms, and an effusion of blood, before the claims of the parties could be heard and decided by a convention of neighbouring Zemindars, selected to draw a line of demarcation, and bound by a solemn oath to act impartially.*

“ The litigants made choice of an equal number of moonsifs or arbitrators, in some cases one each, in other two to three each. These committees would prolong their sittings for weeks and months, being all the while fed and paid by the parties, caressed and threatened by their chiefs, their relatives and friends, influenced by party spirit, governed by fear, and little verifying the saying common amongst them of ‘Punch men Purmêsur.’ Five different modes of accommodation were in general adoption amongst these Punchayts:—1st. An equal division of the land in dispute. 2nd. The Punchayt selected the oldest and most respectable member of their committee to define the limit, the others consenting to abide by his award. 3rd. A moiety of the line of demarcation was drawn by the arbiters of the one party, and the remaining portion

* “ The oath administered to the person who erects the boundary pillars, if a Hindoo, is the Gunga-Jul, or the Chour, or raw hide of the cow, or swearing by his son. If a Mussulman, the Koran, or the placing his hands on his son’s head The Chour, and swearing by his own child, are the most binding.”

by those of the other. 4th. The Panchayt referred the final adjustment to an old inhabitant of a neighbouring village, upon whose local knowledge and experience they placed more reliance than on their own limited information. 5th. It sometimes occurred to the Panchayt to leave the division in the hands of one of the disputants, whose probity and reputation were established in the vicinity. Village boundary disputes, attended with aggravating circumstances, between the chiefs and cultivators of contiguous and rival states, are of daily occurrence, and the right and title to the smallest strip of land is contested with an obstinacy quite disproportionate to its intrinsic value.

“Little attention is paid by the chiefs or their subjects to the justice or reasonableness of a case: it is quite sufficient, according to Sikh notions, that a claim be advanced and presented, as something may be obtained, and nothing can be lost by the reference to a Panchayt, which will use its endeavours to please, and harmonize its decision to the wants and wishes of those by whom it has been selected.

“Bloodshed between Zemindars, in a boundary dispute, is sometimes atoned for by giving a nata, or daughter in marriage to a relative of the deceased, or commuted to the payment of 150 to 200 rupees, or 125 beegahs of land. In general, however, revenge is sought, and the Khoon-buha, or price of blood, deemed insufficient satisfaction, particularly when a mother has to lament the loss of a favourite child, or a wife with a family, the bereavement of a husband.

“Claims to islands, in a river flowing between the manors, and to alluvions, are determined by what is called the Kuchmuch, or Kishtee-bunna, which practice or rule assigns the land to the proprietor of the bank, or main, upon which the alluvion is thrown, and from which the water has receded. If the island be formed in the centre of the river, and there be depth

of water on each side of it, sufficient for boats to ply, in this case it becomes the joint property of the chiefs on both banks.

“This custom, which obtains in the Sikh states, with regard to alluvion, is universal, so far as my knowledge in the local laws and usages of India has extended, wherever lands are liable to such accidents by an alteration in the course of rivers. In the case of lands cast by the change of the stream from one side of the river to the other, though one chief gains and another loses, yet it is customary to preserve the rights of the Zemindar, if he consent to cultivate the land.

“The decided enmity of two chiefs is seldom a bar to an arrangement in which each finds or perceives an advantage to himself, either immediate or prospective : for streams in India are so subject to change, that the land lost one rainy season may be regained in the next, or even in the cold weather, when the river falls and the floods cease.

“The use and abuse of the ancient privilege of the Zemindars in damming up, and turning the course of a stream into artificial pools, or cuts, for the purpose of irrigating the lands in its vicinity, causes disputes and bloodshed ; and, after much angry dissension, the result is generally a compromise, stipulating for a reciprocal enjoyment of the gifts of nature. In some instances, and in contiguous estates, the parties will agree to take equal shares of the water, either by the hour, or by the day, or by measurement. In other cases, one will receive two-thirds, and his neighbour one-third only, according to their respective and pressing wants. The landholders, whose possessions are adjacent to the hills from which end their base, these streams and springs take their rise, require and demand a very large portion of the water for their rice lands, into which it is diverted by numberless water-courses, drawn with great ingenuity by the cultivators

into distant and countless parterres. Those who hold land at a distance, and lower down the river, in the more arid district, are querulous that the streams do not flow unobstructed in their natural course, which would give them the unabsorbed portion to irrigate their wheat and barley crops.

“It seems to be a question how far a Chief may be justified in entirely obstructing the course of natural streams, and in appropriating the waters to his own exclusive advantage, to the serious detriment and loss of his neighbours, whose rights he may be bound to respect, so far as they have relation to property. On the whole, it appears most just that all should partake as far as circumstances will admit, of a share in the water of a natural stream or rivulet, and that when the absolute wants of those on the upper part of the stream have been supplied, the surplus should be again turned into, and permitted to flow in its bed, to satisfy others lower down, whether for irrigation or the consumption of the people and cattle, in the arid districts. The lesser currents do not swell in the hot months, as is the case with the larger rivers, which debouche from the Himalayas, and are fed in warm weather by the liquefaction of the snow: the supply of water in them is hence so scanty as scarcely to administer to the necessities of those near their heads, whilst the distress of others, further down the stream, induces them to become more clamorous as the quantity decreases, and ultimately stops short of them.

“Bunds, or dams, are always constructed, after the rains have ceased, to raise the water to a level with the surface, and to render it applicable to the purposes of irrigation. Were a total prohibition of this beneficial practice to be enacted, large tracts, on many estates, through which streams flow, in deep channels, would become uncultivated; and the villages depopulated, to the serious loss of the proprietors and the ruin of their

Zemindars. With the view of relieving the deficiencies experienced from the want of the fluid in the arid districts lower down, a substitute for the dam might be found in a hydraulic wheel of simple construction, to draw the water to the level, and in places where the banks are comparatively low, it will only be requisite to dig the rool, or cut, for the reception and carriage of the water deeper, and to raise it in the cut by sluice-boards. The churras or leathern bags, in common use at wells, with a relief of bullocks might also be serviceable in other spots. All these expedients, however, fall very short of the utility and cheapness of the dams when water requires to be conveyed many miles, and every rool is a canal in miniature.

“Nuptial contracts are made in early youth by the parents or nearest of kin, who in too many cases are influenced more by pecuniary and sordid motives than by the welfare of the children. Disagreements are very common relative to betrothments (mungnee), and to breaches of promise of marriage (nata or nisbut), amongst all classes of the inhabitants. In some instances real or imaginary diseases, or bodily defects, will be alledged by one of the contracting parties as a reason why the bargain should be annulled; in others, a flaw in the caste; and in most, a discovery that the girl had been promised to two, three, or four different families from all of which the needy parents or guardians had received money, ornaments, or clothes. If both parties be the subjects of one chief, they appear before him, and either he or his officers satisfies them, or refers the decision to a punchayt of the same class as the disputants. If the complainant and defendant happen to reside in separate jurisdictions, and either of the chiefs persevere in evading a compliance with the rule in such cases, or reject the award of punchayt, gaha, or self-indemnification, is adopted by the opposite party, and the subjects, property, and cattle of his

neighbour are picked up and detained until satisfaction be offered and procured. The other side issues its letters of marque : and this pernicious system is frequently carried to the commission of serious outrage, and to infractions of the public tranquillity. It is not a rare occurrence for a parent or a guardian to be convicted of marrying a girl to one man after her betrothment to another. The chief, or a punchayt, in general in such cases gives a verdict that the plaintiff is entitled to a female from the family ; and if there be not one, the parents or guardian must find a substitute, or, as a *dernier expedient*, to which the injured party very unwillingly assents, the money he may have expended, or a trifle in excess with interest, is decreed to be restored to him, that he may find a spouse elsewhere.

“ Amongst all the Jât families, and some others of the lower classes in the Punjaub, a custom prevails, on the demise of one brother leaving a widow, for a surviving brother to take his sister-in-law to wife. The offspring by the connection are legitimate, and entitled to succeed to a share of all the landed and personal property. It is optional with the widow to take either the eldest (Jeth) or the youngest, who is generally preferred and deemed most suitable. Should she determine to relinquish worldly ideas, and reside chaste in her father-in-law’s house, she may adopt this course ; but such instances are very rare, particularly in the case of young females, and are not to be looked for in a society amongst tribes notorious for the laxity of their morals, and for the degeneracy of their conceptions.

“ In default of surviving brothers, and in accordance with acknowledged usage, the widow is at the disposal of her father-in-law’s family. From the moment she has quitted the paternal roof, she is considered to have been assigned as the property of another,

and ceases to have a free will. Where the hymeneal bond is so loosely and irrationally knit, it is not a matter of surprise that the feeble tie and servile obligation which unite the wife to the husband should make but an insecure and heartless impression. Females are daily accused before chiefs and their officers of breaches of conjugal virtue, and of having absconded to evade the claims of a father or mother-in-law, or the established rights of a jeth or a daiwur. When they have fled into the territory of another chief, it is often difficult to obtain their restitution; but the solicitations of a punchayt, and the more forcible argument of reprisals, are in the end efficacious; and the unfortunate woman, if she do not in a fit of desperation take opium, or cast herself into a well, is necessitated to submit to the law of the land, which she will again violate on the first opportune occasion. Sense of shame or feelings of honour have no place in the breast of a Jât, and the same may be said of men of other low tribes. They will make strenuous exertions for recovery of their wives after they have absconded, and will take them back as often as they can get them, bickering even for the children the women may have had by her paramour, as some recompense for her temporary absence and for the expense and trouble they have incurred in the search for her.

“ There exists no prohibition against the Suttee. In all cases they are understood to be willing victims, and much real or pretended dissuasion is exercised by the public functionaries, and by friends and relations to divert the miserable creature from her destructive intentions. That affection and duty have not always place in this class of *felo de se*, which would explain and extenuate such a deed, and convert the offspring of superstition into a noble act of self-devotion, is obvious from the frequency of Suttee, and from

the fact that it is not only the favoured wife, but a whole host of females, that sometimes are offered up to blaze on the pyre of their deceased lord. In most cases of Suttee, it will generally be observed, that a slow, reluctant promise has been extracted from, or made by, the wretched woman, in an unguarded moment, when under the influence of grief. A multitude is immediately assembled round her dwelling and person; clamour and precipitancy succeed,—no time is permitted for reflection; honour, shame, and duty, all now combine to strengthen her bloody resolution, —and the scene is hurried through, and closed.

“ Debtors and revenue defaulters who abscond, and find protection in a foreign state, are seldom demanded; and if demanded, never surrendered by even the most petty chief. The promise is made, that when the delinquent has the means he shall discharge whatever sum may appear, on a scrutiny into his accounts, to be fairly due by him. It is not uncommon for a deputation composed of the heads, or of some respectable inhabitants, of a town or village from which a person has removed, to proceed and wait upon the chief with whom a fugitive may find an asylum, and entering into stipulations for his personal safety, to receive him back if he be willing to return.”—*Colonel Steinbach.*

THE END.



